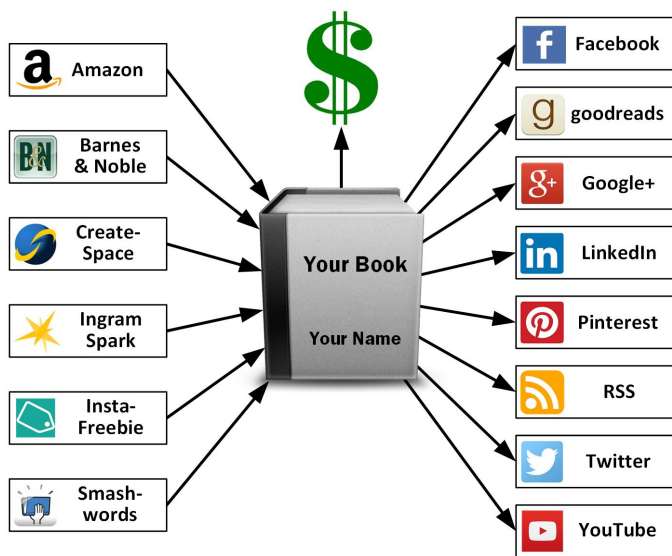


Free & Low-Cost Marketing for Indie Authors



Donald Firesmith

Free and Low-Cost Marketing for Indie Authors

Donald Firesmith

FREE AND LOW-COST MARKETING FOR INDIE AUTHORS

By Donald Firesmith

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INTRODUCTION

The Big Problem

In the bad old days, the vast majority of authors had just two options available to us. If we were very lucky, we might manage to convince one of the few traditional publishers to publish our book, and if we were extremely lucky (or were already a well-known author), they might spend more than a minimal amount of their advertising budget promoting it. Your only other option was to hire a vanity press to print up a bunch of your books, which often ended up cluttering up your garage as you tried desperately to interest local bookstores to take a few. Either way, marketing was either completely out of your control or extremely expensive in both time and money.

Now with the advent of the Internet, print on-demand (POD), and ebooks, it has become extremely easy and inexpensive anyone to get their books published. In fact, these trends have led to a whole new class of authors: the indie (or independent) author.

However, this marvelous ability has been a dual-edge sword. The number of books published each year has sky-rocketed, so much so that competition has become fierce. While getting your book for sale on on-line bookstores such as Amazon has become wonderfully easy, getting potential readers aware that that your book exists, let alone getting them to buy it, has become fiendishly difficult.

Why This Book?

The primary goal of this book help you, the indie author, market your books to your potential customers including

Introduction

individual readers, book retailers such as both brick-and-mortar and online bookstores, and libraries. It is intended to give you the tools you need to either begin marketing your books or to improve your current book marketing.

To the degree that you put its contents into practice, the success of this book will be measured in increased sales or downloads, increased number of reader reviews, and increased fan base.

Intended Audience

This book has been written by an indie author for indie authors.

Specifically, I have based this book on the following assumptions concerning you, the intended reader.

- **You are an indie author.** I assume that you are either an indie author who is self-publishing your own books or you are considering becoming an indie author, possibly after having worked with a traditional publisher in the past.

I understand both of these situations because they both apply to me. I published my seven technical books with traditional publishers, whereas I have published my three fiction books (as well as this marketing book) as an indie author. I have personally used all of the marketing methods in this book and therefore am following the maxim of “eating my own dogfood.”

- **Your book is ready to market.** I assume that you actually have, or will soon have, a book that is ready to be marketed. More specifically, your book has been, or will be, adequately and professionally

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edited so that typos, grammar mistakes, awkward sentences, poor dialog, inconsistencies, and plot holes have been removed. I also assume that your book had been read by several beta readers and that you have seriously considered their constructive criticisms and, when appropriate, addressed them. It makes no sense to spend a lot of time and effort marketing a book that will predominately only receive poor reviews.

- **You books need marketing.** I assume that you are not currently a famous bestselling author whose books fly off the shelf of their own accord. You are not satisfied with your current fan base and name recognition. Your current book sales are significantly lower than you would like them to be.
- **You have limited financial resources.** I assume that you have limited financial resources that you can or are willing to invest in marketing your books. You do not have the money to hire a professional marketer and publicist. You also have very limited money (e.g., less than \$50) to spend each month on marketing. Your book sales are not sufficient to provide a good income *and* provide sufficient funding to plow back into marketing your books.
- **You intend to Do It Yourself (DIY).** You intend to do all, or almost all, of your own marketing. If you have anyone helping you, it is likely to be a significant other such as a spouse, parent, or older child.
- **You are not a professional book marketer.** You have little or no training and experience in marketing. Even if you do have a marketing

Introduction

background, it is not in book marketing. After all, if you did, then you would have little reason to read this book; you could have written this book yourself instead.

What is Marketing?

Many people confuse marketing, sales, and advertising.

- *Book marketing* is the systematic set of strategic business tasks you need to do to get your book into the hands of readers. Marketing is strategic in the sense that its goal is to sell a lot of books to a lot of customers including book stores, libraries, and individual readers.
- *Book sales* is the set of tactical business tasks to get a single potential customer to purchase one or a few copies of your books.
- *Advertising* is publicly announcing the existence and availability of your books to potential buyers. It is only one of many as marketing tasks you will need to perform. Advertising is necessary but not sufficient by itself.

Why is Marketing Important?

Marketing is critical. Without good marketing, the

What Is Missing

Because this is all about free and low-cost marketing techniques that an indie author can afford on a small budget, I am not going to cover the following topics:

- How to select and hire a publicist.

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- Expensive marketing training and consulting companies.

How To Read This Book

TBD

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BOOK MARKETING TOOLS

This book is largely a compendium of tools and techniques that authors can use to market their books. Most will be things that an indie author on a budget can do by him or herself. Others, such as book covers, are things that authors are advised to let professionals make or do. Some book marketing tools are concrete physical things, such as author business cards and bookmarks, whereas others are abstract events, such as blog tours and book launch parties.










Because this book is largely intended to be a reference that indie authors will read incrementally, the individual book marketing tools are listed in alphabetical order to make it easy to find information on the specific tool searched for. The tools are not listed in the order in which they should be used.

No one can do everything at once. We all have limited marketing budgets, and every hour invested in marketing is one hour not spent writing. To the extent practical, we should therefore start by concentrating on those marketing tools that result in the highest benefit for the least cost. To help prioritize the use of these tools, I have included a simple cost/benefit table in the information on each tool.

Each cost-benefit table is a three-by-three matrix that categorizes both benefits and costs as high, medium, and low. The cells in the matrix are color coded so that the best marketing tools reside in the green corner of the table, while the worst tools reside in the table's red corner. A circle representing the marketing tool is then

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placed in one or more cells representing that tool's cost-benefit ratio. The circles are further characterized as simple emoticons with the best tools (i.e., those residing in the green squares) are represented by smiley faces.

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

What Are They?

An *author biography* is a short (2-3 paragraphs) description of you as an author and as a person.

What Are They Used For?

Your author bio is primarily used to promote author name recognition and to let potential customers (including retailers, libraries, and readers) learn about you the author. Bios are also used to establish credibility in terms of numbers of books published and qualifications, especially when writing non-fiction.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium	😊	😐	
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

An author biography is a necessary product for several types of marketing and sales. Given the ubiquity of smart phones with good quality cameras, author bios typically do not cost anything to produce other than a little effort and do not depend on the prior existence of anything else. This is why your author bios is typically

one of the first marketing products you should produce.

What Should It Contain?

Your author bios should contain the following information:

- Your Name
- Your photograph
- A very brief description of you as an author including such subtopics as the number and types of books you write and how long you have been writing
- Your qualifications (especially if you write non-fiction) including your education, relevant work experience, and any awards you may have won
- A very brief description of you personally including such subtopics as your family, pets, and where you live

Guidelines

- **Be brief.** Keep your bio short (e.g., two or three paragraphs long. Your bio is not your resume. Remember that your readers are far more interested in your books than in you.
- **Include photograph.** Give some serious thought to what your photograph should look like. If necessary, invest a little to have a professional-quality photograph made. Ensure that the original photograph is of high resolution
- **Be interesting.** Try to keep your bio interesting to read. No one likes a boring bio.

Author Biographies

- **List qualifications.** If you write non-fiction, ensure that your bio addresses your qualifications. If you write fiction, list your awards.
- **Be flexible.** If you write more than one type of book, consider having multiple genre-specific bios.

Additional Resources

- [My author bio:](#)

A computer geek by day, Donald Firesmith works as a system and software engineer helping the US Government acquire large, complex software-intensive systems. In this guise, he has authored seven technical books, written numerous software- and system-related articles and papers, and spoken at more conferences than he can possibly remember. He is also proud to have been named a Distinguished Engineer by the Association of Computing Machinery, although his pride is tempered somewhat worrying whether the term “distinguished” makes him sound more like a graybeard academic rather than an active engineer whose beard is still more red than gray.

By night and on weekends, his alter ego writes modern paranormal fantasy, apocalyptic science fiction, action and adventure novels and relaxes by handcrafting magic wands from various magical woods and mystical gemstones. His first foray into fiction is the book *Magical Wands: A Cornucopia of Wand Lore* written under the pen name Wolfrick Ignatius Feuerschmied. He lives in Crafton, Pennsylvania with his wife Becky, his son Dane, and varying numbers of dogs, cats, and birds.

AUTHOR BRANDING

What Is It?





Author branding is the marketing practice of creating a distinctive identity that identifies and differentiates you from other authors and your books from theirs.

What Is It Used For?

Most readers are not very adventurous. Once they discover a book they like, they tend to stick with reading more books by the same author and similar books by similar authors. They like the security that comes with the familiar. Branding is about providing readers with that sense of the familiar, but in a way that is hopefully unique to you.

Your author brand identity tells potential readers when to expect from you and your writing. It differentiates you. It helps potential readers get to know, like, and trust you as an author. It helps readers develop an emotional attachment to you so that they will buy your books just because you are the author. It is also used to give readers the perception that you write high quality books that they will like and should therefore buy. Finally, it will help you connect your writing to the readers who will appreciate it the most.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

By increasing name recognition, a branding influences potential readers to use their limited funds to buy your books in spite of massive competition between books. By creating a loyal fan base, branding making winning author and book awards easier.

The initial cost of coming up with the components of your author brand identity is small to moderate. However, the ongoing cost of building and maintaining your brand can be considerable.

What Should It Contain?

Your brand identity could consist of your own unique combination of brand elements:

- Author photograph
- Author imagery such as a logo, graphic, or signature
- Author-specific design elements such as colors or font styles
- Focus in terms of the topics, issues, ideas, and themes you write about
- Personal writing style

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- Area(s) of expertise, especially if you write non-fiction
- The specific genre and subgenres that you write
- Indications of the high quality of your writing (such as awards and praise quotes)
- Tag line
- Pen name (if any)

Guidelines

- **Learn from other.** Study and learn from the brand identities of successful authors. Think about what the components of their brand communicate to you.
- **Know thyself.** Decide how you want to be known as an author. Decide what types of books you want to write and who you want to read them. Decide what ideas and emotions you want people to associated with you.
- **Get input.** Ask your friends, family, editors, and beta reviewers what they think your brand identity is and should be. For example, ask them what they see as a constant across your writing and what differentiates you from other writers.
- **Be unique.** Develop a *unique* brand identity that is easily to recognize and remember. Avoid clichés and generalities. Differentiate yourself by specifically communicating about yourself as an author.
- **Be authentic.** Your brand identity identifies you as an author. You need to be authentic so that your potential readers won't feel cheated when they buy your books and get to know you better.

Author Branding

- **Be consistent.** Consistently use your brand identity across all of your communications channels including websites, webpages, and social media.
- **Be repetitive.** To achieve name recognition, you must communicate your brand identity to an average reader from seven to ten times. Get constant publicity by all of your channels of communication including your author website, your author book blog, your author webpages, your email newsletter, direct emails, social media, and especially posts on others' book blogs. This includes author spotlights, author interviews, book spotlights, guest blog posts, and blog tours.
- **Stay current.** On the other hand, if your writing significantly changes, then modify your brand accordingly.
- **Plan on it.** Let your brand identity be a major driver of your marketing plan.
- **Create content.** Create the content that comprises your brand identity. Create or select your symbols, colors, and fonts. Collect and use praise quotes from authors, literary critics, and other significant influencers to generate an initial perception of trust and credibility. Come up with a unique tag line that differentiates you from other authors in your genre(s). Consider using a pen name, especially if you start writing in a different genre.
- **Build a website and blog.** Create an author website and author blog that exhibits and promotes your author brand identity. Write numerous posts on your brand's themes and topics. Embed links in your

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social media and author webpages back home to your author website.

- **Be persistent.** Building a strong successful brand identity takes time. Not only do you have to create the elements of your brand identity, but you also have to consistently keep them in front of your intended audience.
- **Deliver on your brand.** Keep the quality of your books high with great book covers and with serious story, line, and copy editing.

Examples

- **Raymond Chandler** is the author of the quintessential, hard-boiled 1930s and 40s private detective novel known for their quick action and powerful dialog including memorable similes.
- **Michael Crichton** is a best-selling author of science fiction, medical, and thriller novels that combine strong action, a cautionary element, and a strong foundation in science and technology. His books are often turned into popular movies.
- **Jude Deveraux** is a best-selling author of historical romance novels often exhibiting both adventure and humor.
- **Ian Fleming** is the author of the original James Bond British spy novels that have been adapted into the popular movie franchise.
- **Stephen King** is a highly prolific, award-winning, best-selling author of horror, supernatural, suspense, science fiction, and fantasy novels that are often turned into popular movies and television mini-series.

Author Branding

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AUTHOR BUSINESS CARDS

What Are They?

An *author business card* is your professional business card as an author.

What Are They Used For?

Author business cards are primarily used to convey your contact information (primarily email and author website) to people such as local book store managers, acquisition librarians, and potential literary agents. They are also used to present a professional image, convey your brand as an author, and identify one or more of your books.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High	Medium	Low
	Green	Green	Yellow
	Green	Yellow	Orange
Cost	Low	Medium	High
	Yellow with sad face icon	Orange	Red

Author business cards are useful for presenting a professional image when interacting with bookstore managers, acquisition librarians, potential literary agents, and other influencers you might meet in person.

Author Business Cards

They are also useful for posting on cork boards at coffee shops and informal restaurants. On the other hand, people often end up just discarding most of the business cards they receive.

The cost of author business cards is very minimal. Once you design your card with almost any drawing tool, it is merely a case of ordering the cards from any of a large number of online printing businesses.

What Should It Contain?

The front of your author business cards should contain the following:

- Your Name
- Your photograph (to help remind the receiver of who gave them the card)
- An indication that you are an author
- An indication of the genre(s) of the books you write, possibly in the form of an interesting tag line
- Your official author website URL and email address

The back of your author business cards should contain some of the following:

- Thumbnail pictures of one or more of your [book covers](#)
- Where books can be bought
- Your tag line
- Your phone number and the city and state where you reside (so that they know what time zone you're in)
- A coupon code or a [Quick Response \(QR\) code](#) for a free or discounted download of one of your books

Guidelines

- **Stand out.** Do not use a generic white business card with nothing more than the word *author* under your name. If you do, many people will not remember later one who you are or what [types of] books you write, thereby making your business card relatively useless to them.
- **Be legible.** Use an easily readable font and font size.
- **Be professional.** Avoid garish colors or cluttered designs that may convey a negative, unprofessional impression.
- **Use both sides.** Use both the front and back of the card, with the most useful information on the front.
- **Include photograph.** Incorporate your official author photograph so that the person with your card is more likely remember you and therefore your pitch.
- **Support brand identity.** Incorporate a background graphic design that supports your brand as an author and the genres in which you write (e.g., a dragon or castle for an author of fantasy novels) or possibly the banner of your author website.
- **Include book covers.** If you have a small series or trilogy of books, consider putting their covers on the back.
- **Use as bookmarks.** Insert a business card in each of your book as a book mark, especially if you do not have actual bookmarks.
- **Distribute widely.** Business cards are very inexpensive. Keep some in your wallet or purse. Hand them out at book signings, book clubs, writer's

Author Business Cards

groups, book conferences, and genre-specific conferences.

Additional Resources

As an example, the following are the front and back of my author business cards:



Front of Business Card



Back of Business Card

AUTHOR EMAIL SIGNATURE BLOCKS

What Are They?

An *author email signature block* is a signature block for use at the end of emails that you send in your capacity as an author.

What Are They Used For?

Your author email signature makes it trivially easy for the recipient of your email to link to your author website, visit your author social media webpages, and to buy your book(s).

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High	Medium	Low
	Green	Green	Yellow
	Green with smiley face	Yellow	Orange
Cost	Low	Medium	High
	Yellow	Orange	Red

An author email signature makes the recipient aware that you are a published author. It is a great way to get people with whom you correspond to visit your author website and primary author webpages on social media. Hopefully, some email recipients may even click on a

Author Email Signature Blocks

buy link and buy a copy of your book.

Author email signatures are basically free. All popular email programs enable you to quickly and easily create a standard signature block, and once set up, it is automatically appended to the end of your email without any further work on your part.

What Should It Contain?

Your author email signature should contain the following information:

- An author-related title such as “Author of Romance Novels” or “Science Fiction Author”
- A link to your author website.
- Links to your author-related social media webpages such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.
- Buy links to your books (e.g., Amazon book page)

Guidelines

- **Maintain signature.** Update your author email signature each time you publish a new book.
- **Have multiple signatures.** If you use the same email address for both author-related and -unrelated emails, set up separate email signatures.

Example

The following is my author email signature:

Don Firesmith

Author

20 Bradford Avenue

Pittsburgh (Crafton), PA 15205

donfiresmith@gmail.com

Mobile: 412-2XX-XXXX

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

Author Website: DonaldFiresmith.com

Author Webpages: [Amazon](#), [BookBub](#), [Booklife](#),
[Facebook](#), [Goodreads](#), [Scribd](#), [Smashwords](#), [Wattpad](#)

Personal Webpages: [About.Me](#), [Facebook](#), [Google+](#),
[Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Website](#), [Wikipedia](#)

Hell Holes: What Lurks Below: [Amazon](#), [Apple iBooks](#),
[Barnes and Noble](#), [CreateSpace](#), [Goodreads](#), [Indigo](#),
[InstaFreebie](#), [Kobo](#), [Smashwords](#)

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AUTHOR INTERVIEWS

What Are They?

An *author interview* is a conversation in which the author answers a series of questions posed by the host of the interview.

Interviews of indie authors come in the following three forms, listed in order of increasing cost and therefore decreasing frequency:

- *Textual interviews* are author interviews in the form of written recordings. They are by far the most common form of interviews most indie authors will give. Most will be hosted on various Internet [book blogs](#) possibly as part of [blog tours](#), but you should also try to convince reporters with local newspapers to interview you. Often, a book blogger will email you a set of 10 to 15 generic interview questions and ask you to select some subset to answer.
- *Audio interviews* are author interviews in the form of audio recordings. They are typically embedded in posts on book blogs or are broadcast as part of Internet radio shows.
- *Video interviews* are author interviews in the form of video recordings. They are typically embedded in posts on book blogs or internet book conference websites. Typically, they are also subsequently posted on YouTube. I will ignore television interviews in this book because relatively new indie authors are highly unlikely to be interviewed (e.g.,

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on local cable TV shows) without paying exorbitant advertising fees.

What Are They Used For?

Your author interviews are primarily used to gain name recognition among potential readers of your books. They let your readers know more about you and the books you write. They make a nice complement to your author biographies.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High	Medium	Low
	Green	Green	Yellow
	Green with smiley face	Yellow	Orange
Cost	Low	Medium	High
	Yellow	Orange	Red

An author interview is a nice way to introduce yourself to potential readers, let your fans get to know you better, gain name recognition as an author, and to discuss your latest books. If you are the author of non-fiction books, interviews are a good way to build credibility as a subject matter expert. Finally, author interviews typically lead to increased book sales.

The cost of individual author interviews tends to be low, consisting primarily of the time and effort needed to convince book bloggers and others to interview you and to conduct the actual interview. Over time, the time and

Author Interviews

effort per interview may increase because once you have had enough interviews under your belt, it becomes progressively harder to come up with new questions or new things to say in your answers. The financial cost of an author interview may be subsumed within the cost of the associated blog tour.

What Should It Contain?

Author interviews typically contain the following information:

- An introduction of the author and his or her most recent books by the interviewer
- Interviewer questions and the author's associated answers
- A recommendation by the interviewer that members of the audience purchase the author's most recent book(s)

Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to interviewers (e.g., book bloggers):

- **Reach out to authors.** Contact relevant authors and politely ask if they would be willing to give an interview.
- **Emphasize you fan base.** If your book blog or Internet radio show has a large audience, use this fact to help convince the author to grant a review.
- **Don't give up.** Don't get discouraged if many, especially the more famous and established authors, turn down your requests for an interview. There will always be many more authors you can ask.

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- **Ask in person.** If you attend relevant conferences where relevant authors will take part, ask the author in person.
- **Join blog tours.** If you host stops of blog tours, tell the tour organizers that you post author interviews.
- **Let authors choose.** Have a large set of reusable questions, and allow the authors to select a good sized sample of questions to answer.
- **Be inventive.** Be creative with your questions so that all of the interviews don't end up sounding the same.
- **Prepare.** Do your homework on the author and his/her books so that you can include some author-specific questions. For example, the author may have interesting hobbies or experiences that could result in interesting answers. The authors will appreciate your personalizing the interview.
- **Have a theme.** Consider holding a themed interview in which all of the questions relate to a single theme.
- **Go beyond books.** Don't always restrict your interviews to being about the author's most recent book. Consider holding an informative interview in which the questions relate to the art and craft of writing (such as how to create three-dimensional characters or believable fictional worlds).
- **Respect the author's valuable time.** Limit the duration of an interview to 15 or 30 minutes or at most an hour. Discuss the duration ahead of time and obtain the author's agreement on the time.
- **Limit number of questions.** Between 5 and 10 questions result in an interview that is neither too short or too long for posting on a book blog.

Author Interviews

- **Provide questions ahead of time.** Consider providing the questions to the author prior to audio and video interviews so that the author can prepare interesting responses.
- **Communicate time and venue.** Let the author know when (i.e., date and time) and where (e.g., URL) the interview will be published (e.g., posted or broadcast) so that the author can publicize the interview.
- **Be complete.** When posting textual interviews on a book blog, include an [author photograph](#), links to the author's website, and [buy links](#) to the author's books.

The following guidelines apply to the authors being interviewed:

- **Be prepared.** Prepare for each audio and video interview by considering potential questions and things you might say regarding your books and writing process.
- **Be entertaining.** The primary purpose of the interview is not to sell your books but to entertain the audience and keep them interested. Consider incorporating interesting anecdotes into your answers. Be energetic, and share your enthusiasm for your books.
- **Be succinct.** When giving live interviews, be aware of the time and stay within the interview's time constraints. Stay on topic, and keep your answered brief. Be able to describe your book(s) succinctly in only a few sentences.
- **Know your audience.** Ask the interviewer about the audience if you are not familiar with them.

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- **Pay attention.** Listen carefully to the entire question before answering it.
- **Be honest.** Be authentic when answering the questions.
- **Don't get defensive.** Be prepared, and remain calm when answering tough questions.
- **Refer to your book.** Mention your book by name. If it is non-fiction, provide a representative sample of useful information as a teaser, and then refer the audience to your book for more information.

Examples

- Check out the interviews on my [author website](#) for potential questions to ask during interviews.
- [50 Brilliant, Original Questions to ask an Author](#)
- [Author Interview Questions](#)
- [Master List of Interview Questions for Writers - The Wordsmith's Forge](#)

AUTHOR PHOTOGRAPHS

What Are They?

An *author photograph* is a photograph of you as an author that is suitable for use in your marketing.

Author photographs typically come in the following sizes and resolutions:

- *Thumbnails* are small, low-resolution photographs that are suitable for use online.
- *Mid-size photographs* are medium size, high-resolution photographs suitable for use on your books' back covers.
- *Full-size photographs* are large, high-resolution photographs suitable for press releases and posters.

What Are They Used For

Your author photographs are primarily used to create other marketing products rather than being used by themselves including:





- [Author business cards](#)
- [Author interviews](#)
- [Author spotlights](#)
- [Author webpages](#)
- [Author websites](#)
- [Book cover](#)
- [Book spotlights](#)
- [Book trailers](#)
- [Guest blog posts](#)
- [Press kits](#)

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- [Press releases](#)

Author photographs are also part of your branding as an author. Although unfair, readers will still subconsciously judge you and your books based on your photograph.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

A good author photograph has many uses and should be considered a mandatory part of one's marketing. A good photograph can significantly increase sales, whereas a bad author photo can be worse than no photo at all.

The cost of such a photo can vary from zero to several hundred dollars depending on the photographer.

Guidelines

The following are guidelines for the photographer:

- **Fit intended use.** Take the photograph that will best fit its intended use (e.g., part of a website banner or on the book's back cover or jacket).
- **Determine author's message.** Ensure you're your author photograph conveys your brand identity. Determine the author's expectation in terms of the

Author Photographs

photos' look and feel. What is the author trying to signal to the photo's intended audience? Should it convey a message that is casual or formal, friendly or professional, humorous or serious? Does it fit the author's personality and the book's theme or subject matter? Remember that readers tend to like authors they can identify with.

- **Shoot in landscape.** Take the photographs in landscape rather than portrait mode. Additional negative space provides the graphic designer more flexibility when using the photo in a digital environment. For example, having the author gaze into the negative space enables the designer to fill that negative space with text so that the author's gaze emphasizes the text. The initial photo can always be cropped to fit the specific use.
- **Determine methods.** The author should set the desired outcome, but the photographer should choose the best methods to achieve the author's desired outcomes.
- **Provide options.** Shoot a lot of photos including different poses, backgrounds, and settings. Also include white backgrounds that can be photo-shopped.
- **Avoid excessive photo-manipulation.** Perform minor retouching to fix imperfections. However, avoid excessively photo-shopping the pictures to the point where they look obviously and unrealistically better than in real life.
- **Provide electronically.** Provide the photos in electronic format (e.g.,jpg and png format) in

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

addition to on paper so that the author can use them online.

- **Provide full rights.** Provide the author full copyright to the photographs so he or she can copy and use them commercially (such as on the back cover of the author's books). Charge the author per session rather than per photo.

The following are guidelines for the author:

- **Hire a professional.** If you can afford it, hire a professional photographer rather than use an amateur (e.g., a spouse or friend). However, also don't use a mall photo shop that specializes in quick and inexpensive high school graduation or passport photos.
- **Communicate.** Clearly tell the photographer what you want the photos to convey and how you intend to use them.
- **Determine your message.** Determine the message you want your photo to convey to your intended audience.
- **Convey your message.** Select your facial expressions, poses, and clothes that will best convey your message to your intended audience.
- **Obtain copyright.** Obtain full legal rights to the photographs so that they can be used for commercial purposes.
- **Get other's opinions.** Get inputs from many people when selecting the photos to use. If you have an agent or publicist, ask them to help make the *final* selection, but don't inundate them with all of the photos up front.

Author Photographs

- **Make photos available.** Include a high-resolution copy of your author photograph in your press kit and on the author webpage on your author website. Allow and enable others (e.g., book bloggers and members of the media) to use your author photographs.

Examples

- The author website of Spanish author [Isabel Allende](#) is interesting because each time you visit it, you see a different professionally-taken author photograph.

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHTS

What Are They?

An *author spotlight* (a.k.a., author profile) is a short article or blog post focusing on a single author and his or her books.





Author spotlights can be contrasted with the following similar marketing tools:

- [*Author webpage*](#). The distinction between an author spotlight and an author webpage is primarily an issue of venue and responsibility. An author spotlight is a guest appearance on a venue that is not under the author's control so that the author must convince the owner to approve the spotlight. On the other hand, an author webpage is typically created and maintained by the author.
- [*Book spotlight*](#). The distinction between an author spotlight and a book spotlight is not always clear because the two are often combined in a single blog post.

What Are They Used For

Author spotlights are used to introduce an author to new potential readers, to build the [*author's brand*](#), increase the author's name recognition, and to indirectly sell more books.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

The amount of benefit associated with any one author spotlight depends largely on the size of the audience of the [book blog](#), [newsletter](#), or magazine in which it appears. Author spotlights typically become valuable when a significant number have and are being regularly published.

The cost of an individual author spotlight is relatively minimal, especially if one has already developed its component parts so that they can be quickly and easily reused. Book bloggers are often very willing to post author spotlights if politely asked. One way to guarantee author spotlights is to organize a blog tour, which will include author spotlights along with other types of postings.

What Should It Contain?

Author spotlights should contain the following:

- [Author biography](#)
- [Author photograph](#)
- [Author interview](#) (optional)

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- List of author's books with associated [buy links](#) and [short blubs](#) (whereby the length of the blubs depends on the number of books in the list)
- List of any [book awards](#) that the author has won
- [Book giveaway](#) (optional)
- Link to [author's website](#)
- Link to [author's social media webpages](#)

Guidelines

- **Prepare.** Prepare and save all of the components of your author spotlight so that you have everything ready when you get approval for an author spotlight.
- **Ask bloggers.** Politely ask bloggers who run [book blogs](#) or [newsletters](#) in your genre if they will post an author spotlight for you.
- **Ask authors.** If you and another author both write books in the same genre and if you both have book blogs as part of your author websites, suggest exchanging author spotlights on each other's blogs.
- **Order blog tours.** Order blog tours that will include the posting of one or more of your author spotlights.
- **Keep records.** Keep records of all of your author spotlights including their venues, dates, and hyperlinks so that you can compare them against book sales/downloads to see how effective they were.

Additional Resources

The following are some typical examples of author spotlights:

- [Donald Firesmith](#)
- [Elizabeth Moon](#)

Author Spotlights

- [Cory Olds](#)

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AUTHOR WEBPAGES

What Are They?

An *author webpage* is a webpage devoted to a single author. Author webpages come in the following forms:

- *Book club webpages* such as Goodreads
- *Bookstore webpages* such as Amazon author pages
- *Distributor webpages* such as Smashwords
- *Social media webpages* such as Facebook and Twitter

What Are They Used For

Your author webpages are primarily used to increase your social media presence, increase your name recognition, develop your fan base, and promote your books.

Cost/Benefit Table

High	Green	Green	Yellow
Medium	Green with smiley face	Yellow	Orange
Low	Yellow	Orange	Red
	Low	Medium	High
	Cost		

As shown in the preceding cost/benefit table, author webpages are a relatively cost-effective marketing tool.

Author Webpages

While the benefit from each individual author webpage may be small, the benefits add up when you establish a significant number of such webpages. Author webpages should not cost anything if you set them up yourself. Creating each individual author webpage is relatively quick and easy and does not require significant time spent on keeping it current.

What Should It Contain?

Your author webpages should contain:

- [Author biography](#)
- [Author photograph](#)
- [Author interview](#) (optional)
- List of author's books with associated [buy links](#) and [short blubs](#) (whereby the length of the blubs depends on the number of books in the list)

Guidelines

- **Hit all venues.** Be sure to create author webpages for all major venues such as book clubs, book stores, book distributors (if relevant), and the your author-related social media sites.
- **Maintain the webpages.** Keep your author webpages current by adding new books and [book awards](#).

Additional Resources

The following are examples of some of my author webpages:

- **Book clubs:** [BookBub author profile](#), [BookLife author profile](#), and [Goodreads author profile](#)
- **Bookstores:** [Amazon author page](#)

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- **Distributers:** [Smashwords author profile](#)
- **Social media:** [Facebook](#), [Google+](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#)

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AUTHOR WEBSITES

What Are They?

An *author website* is a website devoted to a single author and that author's books.

What Are They Used For?

Your author website is primarily used to provide *the* official online website for information on you and your books. It is also used to enhance your credibility and brand as an author. It is also a way to generate and reward the loyalty of your fan base.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High		😊	😐
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

A good professional-looking author website is one of your most important marketing tools. Building, hosting, and maintaining a good author website will take a moderate amount of time, effort, and money. However, the cost can be unnecessarily excessive if you hire someone else to do all of the work for you.

What Should It Contain?

Your author website should contain the following:

- *Home page.* A home page that introduces your website to its visitors
- *Blog.* Your author's blog posts
- *Books.* Information about your book series and individual books including title, cover, blurb, and buy links
- *Online store.* An online store where readers can buy your books, autographed copies of your books, and any other book-related items
- *Extras.* Unique content such as short stories and background information on your books that readers cannot get anywhere else.
- *Author information.* Information about you as an author such as your biography and photos
- *Press.* Information useful for members of the media such as book critics.
- *Contact me.* Various ways for visitors to your website to contact you (e.g., via form, email, mail, or phone)

Each webpage should include the following:

- *Banner.* A professional-quality graphic across the top of the webpage with your name and website title
- *Navigation menus.* A menu (typically horizontal immediately below the banner) that enables easy navigation to the website's webpages.
- *Share links.* Hyperlinks making it easy for visitors to share your website and webpages with their friends and contacts on their social media.

Author Websites

- *Subscriptions.* Easy ways to subscribe to your [RSS feed](#) and your newsletter (if you have one)

Guidelines

- **Get an author website.** Create a separate author website. Do not merely rely on your social media (e.g., Facebook) webpages. A separate professional-looking website is a very important part of your author branding.
- **Look at other websites.** Check out the websites of successful authors in the genres in which you write, and emulate the ones you find most impressive.
- **Have a good domain name.** Purchase the domain name that best represents you as an author. Use a dot-com website to signify that you are a serious professional author. You can save money by purchasing multiyear domain registration.
- **Obtain good webhosting.** Obtain webhosting from a reputable hosting service that offers high performance so that you visitors will not have to wait a long time for your webpages to load. You can save money by purchasing multiple years of hosting service.
- **Use tools and plug-ins.** Use a website building tool from a reputable low-cost or free website building company (e.g., [WordPress](#) and [Wix](#)). Such tools and associated plug-ins will automatically support blogging and RSS feed generation.
- **Have a good graphic design.** Use a website graphic designer to help you with the banner, color scheme, and any other unique graphics you might need.

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- **Keep growing.** Develop your author website incrementally. It doesn't have to be complete and perfect before going live as long as what's there looks professional. Incrementally adding new content provides an incentive for visitors to return.
- **Keep content valuable.** Incorporate valuable content that will reward your visitors. Regularly update that content to give them a reason to return. Run contests and giveaways.
- **Don't be stingy.** Invest time, effort, and a moderate amount of money in your website. A bad author website (e.g., little content, little or no graphical design) can be worse than no author website at all.
- **Don't send visitors away.** Make any links to external websites open in new browser tabs so that clicking on these links do not take people away from your author website.

Additional Resources

My author website is <http://donaldfiresmith.com>.

Some other nice author websites include:

- [Isabel Allende](#)

AWARDS

What Are They?







An *award* is a prize that is awarded to an author by a recognized organization in recognition of a major literary accomplishment. There are two types of such awards:

- An *author award* is a literary award presented in recognition of a body of work, such as a lifetime achievement award.
- A *book award* is a literary prize that is regularly awarded, typically annually, for the best book in a certain category.

What Are They Used For?

Organizations typically bestow book awards on authors to acknowledge excellence in writing. Readers use lists of award winning books to identify high-quality books to read. Authors biographies typically describe authors who have won book awards as prize-winning authors. Book blasts likewise explicitly identify award winning books.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High		
	Medium		
	Low		
		Low	Medium
		Cost	

Book awards can be very beneficial if they are famous and prestigious, but may be of little value if totally unfamiliar to the potential reader. Some award contests include lesser awards such as finalist or second place that can be used in marketing.

Whereas some award contests are free to enter, many have entry fees that negate their value, especially when you consider that there may be many contestants and that your chances of winning are therefore low.

What Should It Contain?

Book awards should contain the following:

- The name of the award
- The date of the award
- The category of the award (e.g., book genre, new author)

Guidelines

- **Consider costs.** Carefully consider the entry fees and odds of winning when deciding on which

Awards

contests and how many contests to enter. Consider having contest entry fees as an item in your marketing budget.

- **Avoid scams.** A fair number of book awards are essentially scams designed to separate authors from their marketing budgets. **TBD**

Examples

The following webpages list numerous book awards:

- [Amazon](#)
- [Blog Spot](#)
- [Goodreads](#)

Examples of particularly prestigious book awards are the:

- [Pulitzer Prize](#)
- [Newberry Medal](#) (children's books)
- [Hugo Awards](#) (science fiction)

BEST SELLER LISTS

What Are They?

A *best seller list* is an ordered list of the currently most popular books, typically within a single category, as determined by some authority such as the New York Times (NYT) and Amazon.







Different authorities rank books based on different time periods such as most recent hour (e.g., Amazon), day, week (e.g., NYT), monthly (e.g., NYT), and year.

The NYT uses very general and large categories (e.g., hardcover fiction), whereas Amazon uses both general (e.g., all Kindle books) and very specific categories (e.g., Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction > Post-Apocalyptic).

What Are They Used For?

A best seller list is primarily used to help potential readers identify popular books that they might buy.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

Best Seller Lists

Getting your book on a best seller list can have a very big positive impact on sales. However, the value varies depending on the importance of the list and how far down in the list the book is. For example, Amazon keeps top 100 bestselling book lists, which they display 20 books per webpage. Therefore, many more potential buyers will see your book if it is in the top 20 as opposed to if it is rated from 81-100 and thus on the fifth and final page. Once a book makes it near the top of a list, it will tend to remain there due to people who use the list to help them determine what books to read.

In one sense, there is no effort involved in putting your book on a best seller list because the author is not involved in the determination and publication of the list. On the other hand, a lot of effort needs to be invested to get onto the list in the first place.

What Should It Contain?

Best seller lists typically contain:

- A numbered list of books within the category, ranked and numbered from most to least popular
- [Buy links](#) to the books (if the list is online)

Guidelines

- **Concentrate by time.** Because best seller lists vary over time, concentrate your marketing efforts so that they reinforce each other and thereby increase the likelihood of raising your book's sales to the point that it achieves best seller status.
- **Concentrate by source.** If your book is available from multiple sources, pick the source with the most important best seller lists to be the first book buy link listed (e.g., on book blasts). This will maximize

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sales via that source and increase the likelihood that the book gets listed as a best seller.

- **List genres.** Be sure to list all relevant genres and subgenres when publishing your book so that the keepers of best seller lists will properly include the book in its best seller lists.
- **Keep track.** Regularly keep track of your book's sales rank on important best seller lists such as those kept by Amazon. If your book's rank approaches one or more best seller lists, consider immediately having a concentrated marketing campaign to increase the rank of your book the rest of the way.
- **Be aware of limitations.** Amazon and Kindle Direct Press (KDP) require proof that a book is a best seller before the words "best seller" can be added to the book's cover. They also do not consider their own lists sufficiently official, but rather only accept major national or international best seller lists.

Additional Resources

- [Amazon Best Seller Lists](#)
- [New York Times Best Seller Lists](#)
- [USA Today Best Seller List](#)

My book, *Hell Holes: What Lurks Below*, made it to the following positions on two of Amazon's best sellers lists:

- #3 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction > **Post-Apocalyptic**
- #22 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > **Paranormal & Urban**

BLOG TOURS

What Are They?

A *blog tour* (aka., book tour, online book tour, virtual book tour) is an online author-specific book tour consisting of stops at several online book blogs. A blog tour is like a traditional author tour except that the tour stops occur at online book blogs rather than at physical brick-and-mortar book stores. Over a small number of days (typically one or two weeks), different book bloggers will sequentially host postings about you and your books.

Note that unlike physical book tours, everything is done over the Internet and usually everything is set up in advance (i.e., nothing is done live). You supply the content a week or so before the tour begins and the bloggers post the content on their scheduled days.

Note also that no one is paying book bloggers to host your blog tour events. Rather, you are paying a blog tour organizer to find appropriate book blogs, schedule blog tour events with the book bloggers, pass on their content requirements to you, pass your content back to them, keep you informed of who is doing what on which days, and helping you to advertise the blog tour. It is similar to paying a party planner to organize a party including inviting the guests, but no one pays the guests to actually attend the party.

A [book blast](#) is a blog tour that only lasts a single day.





What Are They Used For?

Blog tours are primarily used to advertise your book(s),

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

increase your name recognition as an author, and increase book sales.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

Running blog tours can be very effective ways of advertising your books, depending on the number and quality of the tour stops. The financial cost of a blog tour should not be prohibitive (e.g., typically less than \$100); the primary cost is in the effort needed to create or gather together the content for the individual book bloggers.

What Should It Contain?

- Blog tour announcement.
 - Author name
 - Books
 - Blog tour dates
 - Blog tour schedule
- Blog posts. Over the course of the tour, the different stops on a blog tour should post the following types of posts on different book blogs:

Best Seller Lists

- [Author interviews](#)
- [Author spotlights](#)
- [Book excerpts](#)
- [Book giveaways](#)
- [Book reviews](#)
- [Book spotlights](#)
- [Book trailers](#)
- [Character Interviews](#)
- [Guest blog posts](#)

Guidelines

- **Have regular blog tours.** Blog tours are one of the most effective ways to increase sales, increase your fan base, and gain book reviews. Take part in regular tours, once a month if you can afford it.
- **Outsource blog tours.** Because of the large amount of work involved with organizing and running a blog tour, consider hiring a company that will do this for you. You will have more than enough work coming up with the content for the [book blogs](#) without trying to identify and convince book bloggers to join your blog tour, especially if you are not already a well-known author.
- **Relevant blogs.** Try to restrict your blog tour to relevant blogs. For example, there is little sense in providing content on your hard science fiction novel to a book blog that concentrates on romance novels.
- **Influential blogs.** Try to get your blog tour hosted by blogs with numerous followers. For example, it makes little sense to get an obscure Romanian book blog publishing Romanian-language posts to post

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your English-language posts about a book that has not been translated into Romanian.

- **Choose multiple organizers.** To maximize the total audience, go on blog tours that are organized by multiple organizations. Different organizations will set up stops at book blogs run by different bloggers and that have different audiences.
- **Repeat blog tours.** Regularly (e.g., every 90 days), hire an organization that has organized a successful blog tour for you to repeat the blog tour. An organization with a large stable of book bloggers will be able to set up stops at different book blogs with different audiences than the previous tour.

Examples

For example, I have used [Ultimate Fantasy Books Silver, Dagger Scriptorium Tours](#), and [Enchanted Book Promotions](#) to organize blog tours for my book *Hell Holes: What Lurks Below*. Other businesses organizing blog tours are:

- <http://xpressobooktours.com>
- <http://www.rockstarbooktours.com>

BOOK ADVERTISING POSTERS

What Are They?

A *book advertising poster* is a table-top poster (i.e., a poster printed on poster board with a fold-out stand) that is intended to be placed on a table where an author autographs books or where the books are sold. Book advertising posters come in the following forms:










- A *single book poster* advertises a single book and typically is merely a blown-up photo of the book's front cover
- A *book series poster* advertises multiple books in a series and typically shows the front cover of each of the books.
- An *author/book poster* advertises both the author and one or more of the author's books and shows both the author and the book covers(s)
- A *praise quotes poster* is a poster listing a series of praise quotes.

Contrast with a [book promo picture](#).

What Are They Used For?

Typically placed on the author's book-signing table or on the sales table, a book poster is primarily used to announce and advertise the book(s) being signed and/or sold.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

Book advertising posters are very valuable at drawing people to your table at physical events, especially when there are multiple authors competing for potential reader's attention. The cost is very minimal, whereby the biggest expense would be to hire a graphic artist if you are going to make a poster more complicated than a simple copy of the book cover.

What Should It Contain?

A single book poster should contain some combination of one or more of the following:

- The cover of the book (single book poster)
- The covers of the books in a series (book series poster)
- Author photograph (author/book poster)
- Event information such as location, date, and time (book event poster)
- A tag line
- [Praise quotes](#)

Guidelines

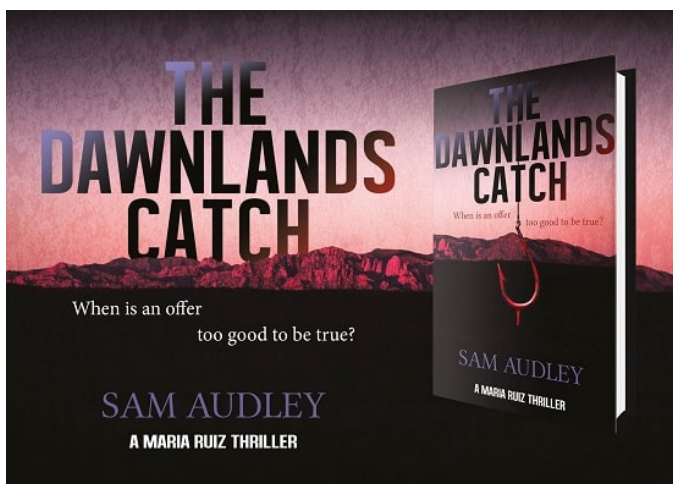
- **Make it appealing** Hire a graphic artist to create the poster so that it is more interesting and appealing than just a copy of your book's front cover. For example, consider making the poster look like a movie poster.
- **Fit the genre or your branding.** Use colors, fonts, and any backgrounds that are appropriate for the genre of the book(s) or for your brand as an author.
- **Sale your book(s).** Include a high-resolution photo of the covers of the associated books as well as a praise quote and any book awards won,
- **Include author photo.** Consider including a high-resolution author photograph to explicitly show you as the author and thereby make it easier for people to recognize you.
- **Make text readable.** Use a large font size and an easily-readable font for any text.
- **Reuse the posters.** Carefully store your physical book advertising posters so that you can reuse them at multiple events. Save the graphics files you used to order the custom table posters for when you need to have new ones made.

Additional Resources



Example book award poster that is identical to the book cover.

Book Advertising Posters



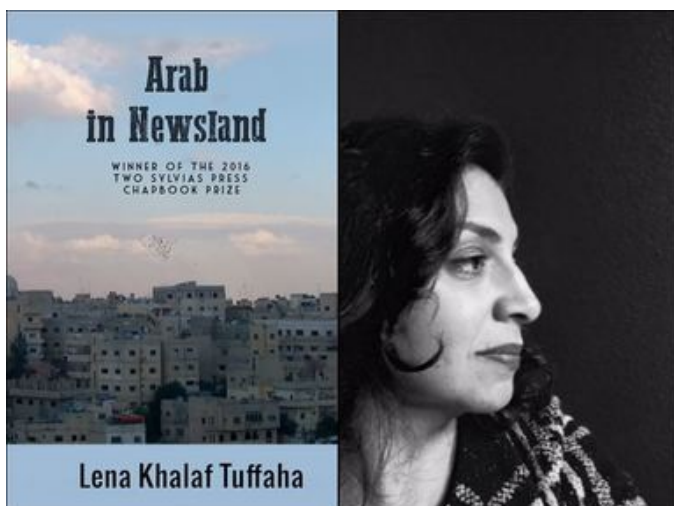
Example [book advertising poster](#) based off a book promo photograph.

Book Marketing for Indie Authors



Example book advertising poster for a popular book series.

Book Advertising Posters



Example [book advertising poster](#) combining photographs of both the book cover and the author together with a notification of a book award



Example [book advertising poster](#) combining the book title, a praise quote, and an illustration from the book.

BOOK BLASTS

What Are They?

A *book blast* (a.k.a., *book blitz*) is a one-day [blog tour](#) with multiple stops restricted to a single book. Book blasts come in the following three varieties:

- [Cover reveals](#) are book blasts that occur on the prelaunch day on which the book cover is first revealed to potential readers.
- *Release day* (a.k.a., *book launch*) *blasts* are book blasts that occur on the day that the book is first available for sale to readers.
- [Book trailer reveals](#) are book blasts that occur on the day that a book's trailer is first revealed to potential readers.

Note that some people misuse the term book blast as a synonym for a [book spotlight](#). The key differences are that:

- A book blast lasts only one day, whereas a book spotlight typically lasts multiple days and often remains as a permanent webpage.
- A book blast has multiple stops (i.e., venues), whereas a book spotlight has a single venue such as a book blog.
- A book blast may include one or more book spotlights, but will typically also contain other types of promotions.

What Are They Used For?

The primary purpose of a book blast is to generate a

Book Blasts

large spike in that book's sales. A highly successful book blast may even generate sufficient sales in a single day to raise the book's sales rank to where it lands on Amazon's top 100 best seller lists for one or more of the book's genres, at which point the spike may become self-reinforcing, especially if it ends up on the first webpage of 20 books.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High		😊	😐
	Medium	😊	😐	😞
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

The benefit is directly proportional to the number of stops on the book blast blog tour and the popularity of those blogs. The cost will be either you time and effort if you go the do it yourself (DIY) route or in the form of a fee paid to a book tour organizer. Naturally, a longer multiday blog tour with more stops will tend to generate more sales, but will likely also cost more.

What Should It Contain?

As a type of [blog tour](#), a book blast should therefore include the same information:

- Book blast announcement:
 - Book title

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- Author name
- Book blast date and schedule
- Book blast stops (venues)
- Book blast stops on book blogs, the author's website, and the author's social media webpages:
 - [Author interviews](#)
 - [Author spotlights](#)
 - [Book excerpts](#)
 - [Book giveaways](#)
 - [Book launch party](#) at a physical venue
 - [Book reviews](#)
 - [Book spotlights](#)
 - [Book trailers](#)
 - [Character Interviews](#)
 - [Guest blog posts](#)

Guidelines

- **Outsource the book blast.** Because of the large amount of work involved with organizing and running a book blast with many stops, consider hiring a company that will do this for you. Using a professional blog tour organizer will save a lot of your personal time and effort, and the tour organizer will have a pre-existing cadre of bloggers they can use. You will have more than enough work coming up with the content for the book blogs without trying to identify and convince book bloggers to support your book blast, especially if you are not already a well-known author.

Book Blasts

- **Select appropriate organizer.** When using a blog tour organizer, make sure that they promote books in your genre.
- **Relevant blogs.** Try to restrict your book blast to relevant blogs. For example, there is little sense in providing content on your hard science fiction novel to a book blog that concentrates on romance novels.
- **Influential blogs.** Try to get your book blast hosted by blogs with numerous followers. For example, it makes little sense to get an obscure Romanian book blog publishing Romanian-language posts to post your English-language posts about a book that has not been translated into Romanian.

BOOK BLOGS

What Are They?

A *book blog* is an online blog, typically focusing on one or more related genres of books such as paranormal, fantasy, and science fiction or romance and paranormal romance.

There are two main types of book blogs:




- An *author book blog* is produced by an author and is usually included in the author website. The scope of this type of book blog is primarily the individual author and his or her books, although it may include guest blog posts by other authors.
- A *blogger book blog* is produced by a blogger other than an author. This scope of this type of book blog is typically restricted to authors and books within a single genre or cohesive collection of genres (e.g., speculative fiction would include science fiction, fantasy, paranormal, and horror).

What Are They Used For?

In general, book blogs are used by book bloggers to give them an online venue for posting information about their favorite authors and the books they read and review. Book blogs give them a way to meet authors and other book lovers and to develop a fan base.

Book blogs are a great marketing tool for authors to use to advertise their books, to develop a fan base, and to promote their brand as authors.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

Book blogs are probably the single most effective marketing tool for authors to use to get the word out about themselves and their books. However, the value largely depends on the size of the book blog's audience and its relevance in terms of genre.

The cost of the author's book blog can be significant because of the need to regularly post content that will cause potential readers to continually return to the blog. The costs associated with blogger book blogs consists largely in the effort required to identify appropriate book blogs and to convince their book bloggers to post about you and your books. There is also the potential cost of hiring a blog tour organizer to set up posts on the book blogs making up the stops of the blog tour. There is also the effort involved in developing and sending requested content to the book bloggers.

What Should It Contain?

Your book blog should contain the following kinds of blog posts:

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- [Author interviews](#)
- [Author spotlights](#)
- [Book cover reveals](#)
- [Book excerpts](#)
- [Book giveaways](#)
- [Book reviews](#)
- [Book spotlights](#)
- [Book trailers](#)
- [Character interviews](#)
- Event notifications such as [book awards](#), [book conference](#) announcements, [book launch parties](#), [book signings](#), and relevant news
- [Guest blog posts](#)

Guidelines

- **Entertain and enlighten.** To keep potential readers returning for more, ensure that they think the blog posts are worth reading. Make your posts entertaining. Use your posts to enlighten the readers and give them insights into your books and writing process. Give them content (e.g., short stories, character interviews) that are not available anywhere else.
- **Don't just sell.** Potential readers will only return to book blogs that they think are interesting and entertaining. Author book blogs will not be popular if their posts are almost nothing but ads for the author's books.
- **Invite guests.** Invite other book bloggers to submit guest blog posts.
- **Join [blog tours](#).** Sign up with blog tour organizers to sponsor stops at your book blog.

Book Blogs

- **Syndicate.** Post the blog posts from your [author website's](#) book blog onto your Amazon Author Central webpage, Goodreads author webpage, and your social media [author webpages](#). Reuse your blog posts in your author [email newsletter](#). Connect your blog posts to your website's [RSS feed](#).
- **Aggregate.** Submit your blog to blog aggregators (e.g., <http://www.blogorama.com/>) that will take the RSS feed from your blog, summarize your posts, group them with posts on the same topic from other bloggers, and publish them.
- **FTC disclosure.** Because a good book review can be construed as an advertisement benefiting either the author or the book's publisher, the US Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) [*Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising*](#) require that a book blogger discloses at the beginning of the book review if he or she received the book free, for example as an advanced review copy (ARC). Such disclosures warn the reader of the admittedly small potential for a conflict of interest that might bias the reviewer's opinion in favor of the book.

Examples

- [My book blog](#)
- A few example book blogs with posts about me and my books include: [Angela Kay's Books](#), [Renee Scattergood](#), [The Sinister Scribblings of Sarah E. Glenn](#), [Terry Tyler Book Reviews](#).

BOOK BLURBS

What Are They?


A *book blurb* (also called a book synopsis) is a very short marketing description of your book. Different venues often have different requirements in terms of length, and so book blurbs typically comes in three forms:

- A single sentence
- A single short paragraph of two or three sentences
- Two or three paragraphs

What Are They Used For?

A book blurb is primarily used to convince a reader to buy your book. It is also used to convince bookstores and libraries to stock your book.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

Book blurbs are extremely important, being one of the key factor people use when deciding which books to

Book Blurbs

buy. It is also a required prerequisite for many of the other marketing tools in this book. While the amount of effort per word may be high, the actual amount of effort required to create excellent book blurbs is merely moderate.

What Should It Contain?

Your book's blurb should contain the following information in the following order:

- *Situation*. An introduction of a situation involving one or more main characters
- *Challenge*. A challenge, threat, or conflict that the main character(s) must overcome if they are to achieve their goals
- *Summary*. A summary sentence that describes the book in terms of its genre
- *Praise quotes*. Optional statements of praise for the book made by other authors, professional reviewers, book bloggers, and even readers
- *Book awards*. An optional list of any awards that the book or you as author have won
- *Book review* data. The number of top-ranking book reviews that have been posted (e.g., Amazon 5 star reviews)

Guidelines

- **Create early**. Your book's blurbs are potentially the very first book marketing tool you should create.
- **Sales pitch**. A book blurb is not merely a synopsis of the book, but rather a sales pitch to your book's potential buyers.

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- **Follow a formula.** Effective book blurbs tend to conform to a standard structure.
- **Hook the reader.** Ensure that the first sentence grabs the reader's interest. End the challenge section with a cliff hanger that makes the reader want to buy the book. Make the readers care about the characters and whether they will overcome the challenge. Use the summary to let the reader know if the book is similar to the type of books the reader buys.
- **Create different lengths.** Create three blurbs for each book to meet the length requirements of various venues: a single sentence, a short paragraph, and one or two full paragraphs. Use the blurb that meets the length requirements of the venue. Avoid long blurbs that force the reader to scroll to read.
- **Look at examples.** Look up and analyze the influential book blurbs of major books and highly successful authors.
- **Invest significant effort.** Do not skimp when investing your time creating your book's blurbs. Because they are one of your two most important tools for convincing potential readers to buy your book, it is critical that you spend considerable effort in creating the most effective synopses of your book you can. Do multiple rewrites. Carefully consider each word. Keep the writing consistent with the book's genre. Keep the sentences easy to read (e.g., relatively short, no unnecessary words, and simple sentence structure).
- **Augment them.** Augment your blurbs by adding [praise quotes](#), a list of any [awards](#) the book has won, and large number of top review rating (e.g., number

Book Blurbs

of Amazon five star reviews). However, do not list the number of five star reviews unless that number is impressively large.

- **Avoid common mistakes.** Never include spoilers or clichés. Do not brag that your book is like (or as good as) famous bestselling books or that you are like or as good as famous bestselling authors. Leave such bragging to your reviews who have no conflict of interest (e.g., family and close friends).
- **Review them.** Have your editors and beta readers review your book blurbs. Wait a few days and then reread your own blurbs. Read your blurbs on different devices (such as desktop computers, laptops, tablets, and smart phones) to see how they look on different-sized screens.
- **Test them.** Compare competing versions of your blurb to see which one is most effective generating clicks on [buy links](#) and actual sales. Run a poll on your [author website](#).

Examples

The following are example book blurbs of my book, *Hell Holes: What Lurks Below*.

- Short book blurb:

When an oil company sends a team to investigate huge holes mysteriously appearing in Alaska, they discover a danger that threatens to destroy us all.

- Medium book blurb:

When an oil company sends a scientific team to investigate one of dozens of huge holes that have mysteriously appeared overnight in the tundra of the

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

North Slope of Alaska, they discover a far worse danger lurking below, one that threatens to destroy us all...

- Long book blurb:

It's August in Alaska, and geology professor Jack Oswald prepares for the new school year. But when hundreds of huge holes mysteriously appear overnight in the frozen tundra north of the Arctic Circle, Jack receives an unexpected phone call. An oil company exec hires Jack to investigate, and he picks his climatologist wife and two of their graduate students as his team. Uncharacteristically, Jack also lets Aileen O'Shannon, a bewitchingly beautiful young photojournalist, talk him into coming along as their photographer. When they arrive in the remote oil town of Deadhorse, the exec and a biologist to protect them from wild animals join the team. Their task: to assess the risk of more holes opening under the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and the wells and pipelines that feed it. But they discover a far worse danger lurks below. When it emerges, it threatens to shatter Jack's unshakable faith in science. And destroy us all...

"I enjoyed my time in Firesmith's world. I did not want to leave. I really got a kick out of it, and would happily come back for more. Recommended."

MJ Kobernus, author of *The Guardian: Blood in the Sand*

Book Blurbs

“This book rocks.”

Barton Paul Levenson, author of *Dark Gods of Alter Telluria*

“a quick, enjoyable read. Full of action and fraught with danger”

Dave Robertson, author of *Strange Hunting*, *Strange Hunting II*, and *The Brave and The Dead*

“The book is an easy and quick read and an action-filled one that you’ll imagine as a TV series or a movie with no difficulty.”

Olga Núñez Miret, author of *Escaping Psychiatry*

BOOK BUNDLING

What Is It?

Book bundling is the packaging of multiple books together so that they can be purchased as a set for a single lower price. There are typically three types of book bundles:

- Packaging together a physical and ebook versions of the same book
- Packaging multiple books in the same series (e.g., in the form of boxed sets)
- Packaging the audio version with the physical or ebook versions of the same book

What Is It Used For?

The primary purpose of book bundling is to increase sales and revenue by offering multiple related books at a discounted price.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High		😊	
	Medium	😊	😐	
	Low			😡
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

Book Bundling

The benefit of bundling books is often a moderate increase in sales, and it can be especially beneficial when the bundled books have been out for some time and their sales has largely tapered off.

With ebooks, the effort largely consists of merging the contents into a single manuscript, obtaining new ISBN(s), and creating a boxed set cover.

What Should It Contain?

Your book bundling should contain the following:

- TBD

Guidelines

- Keep sales records to help determine whether increase sales overcomes the revenue lost due to the discounted price.
- Also consider other benefits such as increased opportunity for generating reviews.

Examples

- Amazon's Kindle Unlimited enables customers to download the Kindle

BOOK BUY LINKS

What Are They?



A *book buy link* is a hyperlink to a webpage where a potential reader can buy a copy of your book. Book buy links tend to come in two forms:

- Textual hyperlinks named after the source.
- Graphical hyperlinks using either the source's logo or some other picture (e.g., the book cover or the book promo picture) as the icon.

What Are They Used For?

Your book buy links are primarily used to make it super easy for potential buyers to navigate to a location where they can buy your book. Buy links to other author's books (such as books about which you have written a review) can sometimes be used to earn a commission.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

Convenient book buy links are a must for all forms of

Book Buy Links

your on-line presence as an author. You should use them liberally as part of all of your Internet marketing efforts. In addition to being highly beneficial, they are also quick and easy to produce. Many website building tools will automatically generate buy buttons for you or you can create your own with most simple drawing tools.

What Should It Contain?

Your book buy link HTML code should contain the following information:

- The URL address to which the link should point
- Either the link text or the link's image to be displayed

Guidelines

- **Collect buy links.** Collect in a handy place (for example, in an MS Word document) a list of book buy links to *all* of the online locations where prospective readers can buy (or obtain for free) copies of your book. This will make it easy for you to reuse them in the future and to keep the current list up-to-date.
- **Reuse buy links.** Add these book buy links to your:
 - [author email signature](#)
 - [author website](#)
 - social media [author webpages](#)
 - [book spotlights](#)
- **Name buy links.** Make the textual name of the link the same as the name of the bookstore or book distributor to which the link is pointing (e.g., Amazon, Barnes & Nobel, Smashwords).

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- **Use multiple buy links.** Don't put all your eggs in one basket. Use multiple book buy links to different sources of your book because different potential readers may have different places from which they like to buy their books. For example, Amazon may be quite popular among individual readers, whereas libraries and local bookstores may prefer using IngramSpark.
- **Open new window.** If you do not want the potential buyer to navigate away from the current webpage when they click on the book buy link, ensure that the webpage the hyperlink leads to opens in a new tab. To do this, add the following HTML code to the end of the hyperlink: `target="_blank"`.

Examples

For example, I created the following set of buttons for use in my author website as the book buy links for my books. I created them using MS Visio with icons I found on the Internet using Google. I decided to combine both the book stores' brand icons with text so that they would be easy for all people to read. The HTML code for each button is easy to learn and standard across browsers.



BOOK CIP DATA BLOCKS

What Are They?



A *book Cataloging in Publication (CIP) data block* (a.k.a., CIP data block) is a record of bibliographic data that is prepared by the Library of Congress for a book that has not yet been published.

What Are They Used For?

A CIP data block is primarily used by librarians to provide information for cataloging the associated book into their library management system.

An author includes the CIP data block in marketing material (e.g., book information sheets) intended for acquisition librarians to save them the not insignificant effort required to gather the information and thereby increase the likelihood that they will purchase the book for their library. For the same reason, the author also includes the CIP data block in the book's front matter.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

Libraries are a great potential source of sales, both directly and indirectly as readers buy their own copy of books they see in the library. The benefit from creating or obtaining a CIP data block for each of your books is directly proportional to how strongly you market your books to acquisition librarians

It is not easy to obtain all of the information in a CIP data block, especially if you are going to not rely on obtaining it from the Library of Congress. You really need to work with a librarian to get the information you need and to verify that the information is correct. While you can look up some information based on sources you can find on the Internet, one of the subject catalogs cost several thousand dollars and must therefore be borrowed from a library.

What Should It Contain?

The CIP data block has a very specific content and format that includes the following information:

- Author. The name(s) of the book's author(s)
- Title. The title of the book along with the author's name(s)
- Description. A brief description of the book in terms of its edition number, publisher city, publisher name, year of publication, and series including volume number
- Summary. The description of the book, its intended audience, and the language in which the book is written
- Identifiers. The unique identifiers of each version of the book including format and printer/distributor such as International Standard Book Number (ISBN), the Amazon Standard Identification Number

Book CIP Data Blocks

(ASIN) if the ebook is available on Kindle, and the Library of Congress Catalog Number (LCCN) if it exists.

- **Subjects.** The subject headings of the book according to Book Industry Standards and Communications (BISAC), Guidelines on Subject Access to Individual Works of Fiction, Drama, etc. (GSAFD), and Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH)
- **Classification.** The classification of the book based on subject and author in terms of the book'

Guidelines

- **Don't rely on the LoC.** While the Library of Congress creates the official CIP data block, it only does so prior to publication. Create the CIP data block for all of your books, even those that are not officially part of the Library of Congress.
- **Get help.** Get a librarian to help you gather and review the information in the CIP data block.
- **Include in front matter.** Include the CIP data block in the front matter of your book right after the copyright page.
- **Include in library marketing materials.** Include the CIP data block in all marketing materials that you intend to send to acquisition librarians.
- **Include all identifiers.**
- **Include all subjects.**

Additional Resources

The following is the CIP data block for my book *Hell Holes: What Lurks Below*:

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

Name: Firesmith, Donald.

Title: Hell Holes: What Lurks Below / by Donald Firesmith.

Description: Fourth edition. | Pittsburgh : Magical Wand Press, 2016. | Series: Hell Holes, Volume 1.

Summary: An oil company sends team of scientists to investigate huge holes that mysteriously appear in the tundra of the Alaskan North Slope. | Audience: Adult. | Language: English

Identifiers: PCN 2016946862 | ISBN 978-1-51506-807-5 (softcover – CreateSpace) | ISBN 978-1-68419-855-9 (softcover – IngramSpark) | ISBN 978-1-68419-862-7 (ebook – IngramSpark) | ISBN 978-1-31043-121-0 (ebooks - Smashwords) | ASIN B012IUE14U (ebook - Kindle).

Subjects: BISAC: Fiction / Action & Adventure. | Fiction / Fantasy / Paranormal. | Fiction / Science Fiction / General. | LCSH: American–Fantasy–Fiction. | American–Paranormal–Fiction. | American–Science Fiction–Fiction. | GSAFD: Adventure fiction. | Fantasy fiction. | Science fiction.

Classification: DDC 813.62 F57h 2016

BOOK CLUBS

What Are They?







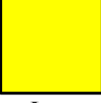
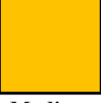

A *book club* is an organization of book readers (and authors) who get together to discuss books and aspects of writing books. They vary from huge online book clubs to small clubs that meet in local libraries or members' houses.

What Are They Used For?

Indie authors primarily join book clubs to:

- spend time with kindred spirits having similar interests
- trade advice and lessons learned concerning writing, publishing, and book marketing
- find beta readers and reviewers
- develop name recognition and create a fan base (especially with regard to large online book clubs)
- advertise their books

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

As shown in the preceding cost/benefit table, your TBD.

What Should It Contain?

Book club membership includes authors and readers, often interested in a specific genre such as science fiction book clubs and romance novel book clubs.

Guidelines

- TBD.

Additional Resources

- [Example](#)

BOOK CONTESTS

What Are They?





A *book contest* (a.k.a., book sweepstakes) is a [book giveaway](#) during which one or more authors give one or more of their books as prizes. Book contests come in the following types:

- An *individual book contest* is a book contest that is hosted by a single author.
- A *group book contest* is a book contest that is hosted by a group of collaborating authors.
- A *cross book contest* is a group book contest in which each author hosts his own book contest of the other authors' books, but not their own.
- A *joint book contest* is a group book contest in which all authors in the group host the same book contest having copies of one or more books from each author as the prize(s).

What Are They Used For?

Book contests are primarily used to increase author and book name recognition, to generate or renew interest in specific books, to increase the author's fan base, to hopefully obtain associated book reviews, and to gather email addresses of readers.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

The benefit from taking part in any single book contest (i.e., providing books as prizes) appears to be at best moderate, although it can be increased by taking part in group contests with reach a larger set of potential readers. The amount of effort involved is typically very little for a single contest and only moderate when performed on a regular (e.g., once every few weeks) basis.

What Should It Contain?

A contest should have the following:

- *Prizes.* The books and any promotional items
- *Dates.* The start date and the end date and time
- *Contest rules.* A list of all of the contest terms and conditions including qualifications for entry (e.g., age and address)
- *Means to enter.* An electronic form for automating the entry process
- *Pre-contest promotion.* Advertising announcing the contest.

Book Covers

- *Post-contest promotion.* An announcement of the winners.
- *List of entrants including contact information.*

Guidelines

- **Advertise.** Widely advertise the contest to obtain sufficient entrants to make the contest worthwhile.
- **Describe prizes.** Provide potential entrants with a detailed description of the prizes. In addition to the title and author, include the number of each book in each version such as ebook in .epub and .mobi format, paperback, autographed paperback, hardback, and autographed hardback).
- **Consider delivery costs.** Ebooks are much less expensive and less work than shipping physical books. If you are shipping an autographed book as opposed to an ebook, it is important to consider shipping costs which can be prohibitively expensive is shipped to a foreign address. You may therefore want to restrict entrants to being from your country.
- **Use [Goodreads](#).** I try to take part in one Goodreads “giveaway” (actually a contest) per month as a way to advertise my books to the subset of Goodreads members who regularly enter their giveaways.
- **Be prepared.** Prepare for awarding physical books as prizes by keeping a sufficient number of books on hand so that the books can be packaged and mailed within a short time after the contest ends.
- **First book as sample.** Choose the first book of a series as the contest prize to entice readers into purchasing and reading the rest of the books in the series.

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- **Collect contacts.** As entrants to the contests to provide their name, physical address (if awarding a physical book), and mail addresses so that you can contact the winner and mail the prize. Consider making contest entry conditional on the entrant subscribing to your [newsletter](#) and or allowing you to use their email for other marketing purposes (e.g., notification of new books).
- **Consider group contests.** To increase the number of entrants, consider collaborating with other authors to create a group contest where each author provides prizes and promotes the contest.
- **Emphasize joint over cross.** It is typically better to take part in a joint group promotion than a cross group promotion because it involves less work (only a single common promotion) and all books are promoted by all members of the group. The only reason to hold a cross promotion instead is that it removes any hint of conflict of interest.
- **Promptly deliver prizes.** Prizes should be sent out within 3-4 days of the close of the contest.
- **Make author(s) responsible.** For group contests, make each author in the group responsible for delivering his or her book(s) to the winner(s).
- **Congratulate winner(s).** Follow up by publically announcing and congratulating the winner(s), which tends to incentive people to enter future contests.

Examples

- [Donald Firesmith's Website - Contests](#)
- [Jonuel Negron's Website - Sweepstakes](#)

BOOK COVERS

What Are They?

For physical books, a *book cover* is a protective cover that is bound together with the pages of the book and consists of the front cover, spine, and back cover. For ebooks, a book cover is the image of the front cover of the physical book that is typically used as the book's first page. When books are bundled into a boxed set, the 3-D cover image is of the side of the box and the spines of the individual books.

What Are They Used For?

A book cover has the following marketing purposes:

- First and foremost, to entice potential readers to buy the book via its cover art, typography (e.g., title font type, color, and size), and optional [praise quotes](#) on the back cover
- To identify the book by its title, author(s), and ISBN
- To describe the book via the [book blurb](#) on the back cover
- Optionally, to identify the author via the [author photograph](#) on the back cover

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High		😊	😊
	Medium	😊	😐	
	Low	😐		
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

The benefit of an excellent book cover is very hard to overestimate because the cover art is one of the top criteria potential readers use to decide on whether to buy the book. You essentially get what you pay for, with benefit increasing with cost.

What Should It Contain?

Your book's cover should contain the following information:

- **Front cover:** Title, author(s), and background image
- **Spine** (physical book and boxed sets only): Title and author(s)
- **Back cover** (physical book only): Book blurb, author photograph, praise quotes, identifying bar code, and background image

Guidelines

The following guidelines refer to the cover itself:

Book Covers

- **Keep it readable.** Make the title prominent, large, and easy to read. Also make the author name easy to read. If you use an unusual font, make sure that it is still easily readable. Ensure that the text stands out from the background cover art with adequate contrast.
- **Minimize number of fonts.** Use no more than two fonts on the front cover.
- **Avoid clip art.** If you are going to reuse existing photography or do photo manipulation, use high-quality stock photographs. Do not use inexpensive clip art.
- **Honor copyrights.** Be sure to get the rights to use any photographs in your cover. Note that while some photos can be freely used, others will require a licensing fee. Some graphic artists also charge more for graphics that are used for commercial purposes, such as a book cover.
- **Make it compelling.** Remember that the key purpose of cover art and typography is to sell the book to potential readers. Make it sufficiently interesting to cause potential readers to read the book's blurb.
- **Make it appropriate.** Ensure that the book cover art is appropriate to the genre so that potential readers can tell at a glance if the book is in the genre they are looking for. Also make it at least minimally related to the book's content such as its setting, characters, or events.
- **Emphasize what's important.** Draw the reader's eyes to the most important part of the cover art. For example, consider the cover of a fantasy book that

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

has travelers riding towards a distant castle. Which is more important, the travelers or on the castle?

- **Consider the resolution.** Books printed on paper need a higher resolution cover than e-books that only need sufficient resolution for a display. Ensure that the finished cover has a resolution of at least 300dpi.
- **Consider the bleed area.** Keep the text sufficiently far from the bleed area, which is the printer's safety margin needed for trimming a physical book to the correct trim size. Ensure that the cover image extends a little beyond the bleed lines.
- **Avoid clutter.** Don't overload the cover art with excessive details. Especially avoid detail on the back cover that would make the text of the book's blurb difficult to read.
- **Avoid generic graphics.** Do not use backgrounds that one would expect to find on uninspired greeting cards such as clouds, oceans, and sunsets. However, clichés are okay in certain genres such as romance novels (bare-chested beefcake with damsel), science fiction (spaceships and planets), and fantasy (castles and medieval garb).
- **Avoid gaudy colors.** Avoid the use of bright attention-grabbing colors.
- **Study.** These guidelines are just to get you started. There are lots of longer, detailed tutorials online that address book cover design in far more detail. YouTube is a good source.

The following guidelines refer to commissioning a graphic artist to create a cover for your book:

- **Start early.** It takes time to find a cover artist, who may have other covers ahead of you. Then, it takes

Book Covers

time to create the cover and iterate it until you are happy with the result.

- **Hire graphic artist.** Although we are taught not to “judge a book by its cover”, that is exactly what potential readers do. Commission a professional graphic artist that specializes in book covers in the relevant genre(s). Do not create your own book cover.
- **Don’t skimp.** Invest a sufficient amount to obtain a good cover. Expect to pay a few hundred dollars, especially if new photography or original artwork is required.
- **Shop around.** You should check out multiple cover artists because their prices may vary greatly. Often, new graphic artists will charge very reasonable prices in order to develop a portfolio of covers and a reputation as a good artist.
- **Check out previous covers.** Check out the graphic artist’s previous covers. Has the artist created good covers for books in the needed genre(s). Does the style work for you? If necessary, can the graphic artist draw people, animals, and places, or is the artist restricted to photo manipulation?
- **Require unlimited modifications.** It is unlikely that the first couple of versions of the book’s cover will need modification. When commissioning a graphic artist to create a cover for you, make sure that the artist will permit you to request unlimited or at least a very large number of alterations.
- **Upgrade your cover.** You can often significantly increase the sales of an older book with diminishing

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

sales by commissioning a new cover and hosting a [book cover reveal](#).

- **Honor the artist's opinion.** When using an experienced graphic artist who has created several successful covers, pay close attention to the artist's artistic recommendations. The artist may well understand what will make a successful cover better than the book's author.

Additional Resources

- [Create a Realistic Book Cover in Photoshop](#)
- [How to Design a Book Cover in Photoshop](#)
- [Designing Book Covers Tutorial \(Advanced\)](#)

Examples



Example front cover with title and author name

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

When hundreds of huge holes mysteriously appear overnight in the frozen tundra north of the Arctic Circle, they threaten financial and environmental catastrophe should any more holes open up under the Trans-Alaska Pipeline or any of the many oil wells and smaller pipelines that feed it. An oil company sends a scientific team to investigate. But when the geologist, his climatologist wife, two of their graduate students, a local newspaper reporter, an oil company representative, and a field biologist arrive at one of the holes, they discover a far worse danger lurks below, one that threatens to destroy all of humanity when it emerges, forcing the survivors to flee south towards Fairbanks.



The author of *Magical Wands: A Cornucopia of Wand Lore*, Donald Firesmith is also a distinguished engineer who has written seven technical books. He lives in Pittsburgh with his wife, his youngest son, and a small menagerie of pets.



Example back cover of Hell Holes: What Lurks Below showing book blurb, author photograph, author biography, and barcode with ISBN

BOOK COVER REVEALS

What Are They?

A *book cover reveal* is a short-duration promotion tied to the initial revealing of a book's cover prior to the book's official release date.

What Are They Used For?

A book cover reveal is used to gain prerelease interest for your book by exposing potential buyers to your book's cover before the book itself is available. A cover reveal can be used to announce both the cover of a new book and an existing book's new and improved cover.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High	Medium	Low
Cost	Low	Medium	High

People do judge books by their covers, and a great cover can greatly increase sales and is worth promoting. The benefit derived from a cover reveal increases with the number of people who see it and their likelihood of being interested in the book (e.g., because they are interested in the genre or have read previous books in the

series). The cost of a cover reveal is relatively low and often consists solely of the effort setting it up in your own venues as well as convincing book bloggers and book websites to host the cover reveal.

What Should It Contain?

Your book's cover reveal should contain the following information:

- *Front cover*: A high resolution photograph of the front cover and of the full cover (front, spine, and back) without text.
- *Book cover artist*. The name of the graphic artist who produced the cover
- *Book release schedule*. The date the book is scheduled to be released.
- *Book teaser*. A short blurb about the book so that they can put the cover in context.

Guidelines

- **Choose appropriate books**. Cover reveals work best when used with fiction books, especially for follow-on books in a series.
- **Use appropriate photo**. Use high resolution photos of the cover, but format them for the Web. Keep their size sufficiently low that they will load in a reasonable time on peoples' browsers and devices.
- **Choose appropriate covers**. Cover reveals work best with impressive, eye-catching covers. The relatively bland covers of many non-fiction books do not result in successful cover reveals. Do not include the existing cover if it is a reveal of a new cover for an existing book. Do not include alternative covers.

Book Cover Reveals

- **Combine with preorders.** Enable preorders of new books before the cover reveal so that readers can preorder the books based on seeing the new covers.
- **Determine venue(s).** Determine the primary (and any secondary) places where your cover reveal will be hosted. It can be your author website, special social media webpages, or on book blogs. When using others' venues, select those that concentrate on books in the same genre(s).
- **Promote widely.** Promote your book cover reveal on your [author website](#), your author website's [blog](#), your author [email newsletter](#), social media (e.g., your author webpages as well as relevant book groups), and others' [book blogs](#). Post links to the primary cover reveal location. Consider creating a Facebook event rather than merely a post on your Facebook page.
- **Announce widely.** Announce the upcoming cover reveal widely, such as on your author website, your book blog, and your social media. State when and where the cover reveal will take place.
- **Keep it short.** The duration of a cover reveal is typically one day, but may last a little longer if all of the venues are not available on the same day.
- **Generate excitement.** Treat the cover reveal as a major event. Communicate your excitement. Consider running a contest in which the winner(s) will receive a free (possibly autographed) copy of the book. Thank fans who comment or tweet about the cover reveal, and do not take negative criticism personally. Consider including a live author Q&A session during the reveal.

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- **Hire professional help.** Consider hiring a book promotion service (such as those that organize blog tours) to organize your cover reveal. They can help with finding book blogs to take part and with promoting via social media to large audiences.

Additional Resources

- [Cover Reveals](#), a blog devoted to cover reveals

DRAFT

BOOK DISTRIBUTORS

What Are They?

A *book distributor* is a company that prints and distributes physical books and also distributes ebooks on behalf of the publisher, who is the author in the case of indie authors instead of a traditional publishing company.


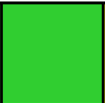
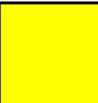



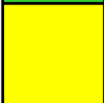
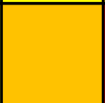

Many book distributors are also book retailers, selling books to individual readers. Book distributors commonly used by indie authors include [CreateSpace](#), [IngramSpark](#), [Kindle Direct Publishing](#), and [Smashwords](#).

What Are They Used For?

Book distributors typically perform some of the following services for you:

- Printing on demand (POD)
- Translation into multiple formats, both physical and ebooks
- Distribution to book retailers (and individual book buyers when also acting as a bookstore)
- Collections and disbursement of royalties
- Record keeping and sales statistics

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

The book distributor locations on the preceding cost/benefit table depends on the book distributor(s) you choose to use. Use of a book distributor is a necessity for indie authors who cannot rely on traditional publishing houses to take over the responsibility of printing and distribution. Most book distributors do not charge fees, but rather work on commission, taking a small percent of the retail price of the book. The primary effort involved is in collecting the required information to register the book and in formatting the manuscript properly for publication.

What Do Book Distributors Require?

To register you book with a book distributor, you will typically need to supply the following:

- Publisher Information:
 - Name and contact information, typically of the indie author or the author's small imprint
 - Banking and tax information (for payment of royalties to the author and fees to the book

Book Cover Reveals

distributor)

- Book Information:
 - Book title and subtitle
 - Author(s)
 - [Book blurb](#)
 - Book series and edition
 - [Book cover](#) (having the proper size and resolution)
 - Book manuscript (properly formatted)
 - ISBN number (which may be supplied by some book distributors, either free or for a small fee)
 - Physical properties such as trim size and paper color for physical books
 - Distribution information including countries and associated pricing information

Guidelines

- Start with [CreateSpace](#) and [KDP](#) for you paperback books and Kindle format ebooks because Amazon is the probably the first book retailer you should concentrate on
- Do not put all of your eggs into a single basket by restricting yourself to a single book distributor such as Amazon. Competing book stores and many libraries do not purchase books from Amazon. Instead, use multiple popular book distributors to ensure that all book formats are distributed to all major book retailers, both especially on-line bookstores.

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- Concentrate first on distributors of ebooks, which is where you are likely to make most of your sales.
- Concentrate first on book distributors who work on commission (that is, a small percent of the retail price), reserving book distributors who charge set-up and book modification fees for later, such as when you begin marketing your books to bookstores and libraries.

Examples

Major book distributors commonly used by indie authors include:

- Baker and Taylor – TBD
- [CreateSpace](#) – paperbacks with Amazon as retailer
- [IngramSpark](#) – physical and ebooks
- [InstaFreebie](#) - free ebooks
- [Kindle Direct Publishing \(KDP\)](#) – Kindle books with Amazon as the associated retailer
- [Smashwords](#) – all formats of ebooks

BOOK EVENT FLYERS

What Are They?

A *book event flyer* is a flyer that advertises a book-related event such as a lecture, [book reading](#), and [book signing](#).

What Are They Used For?

Book event flyers are used to advertise a coming local book event to notify potential readers and other interested parties.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

Book event flyers are an excellent way of advertising a local book event. They are also very inexpensive to produce, especially if you or a friend have any graphic arts ability.

What Should It Contain?

Book event flyers should contain the following:

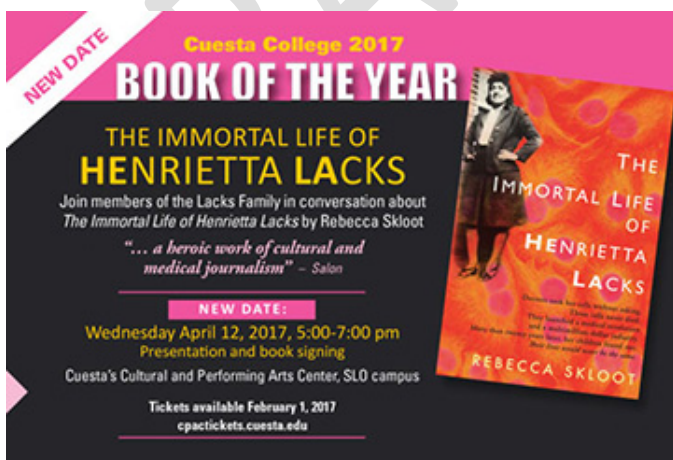
Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- The type of event such as a presentation, book reading, or book signing
- The author and related books
- The date, time, and location
- One or more [praise quotes](#), if any
- The cost of tickets, if any

Guidelines

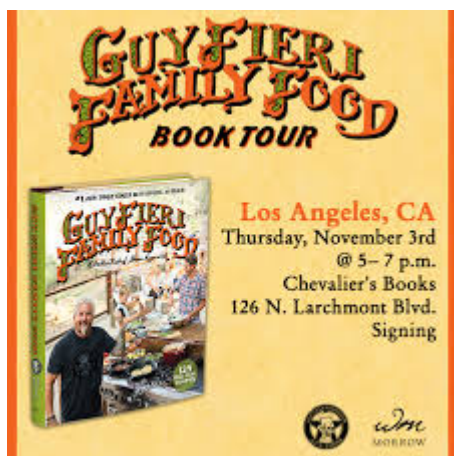
- **Use graphic artist.** Consider using a graphic artist to produce flyers that are visually attractive.
- **Post widely.** Post the flyer widely in the local area at places such as libraries, coffee houses, book stores, community centers, and college campuses. Also post on your author website, author webpages, and social media.

Examples



Example [book event flyer](#)

Book Event Flyers



Another example [book event flyer](#)

BOOK EXCERPTS

What Are They?

A *book excerpt* is a sample of your book intended to give a potential reader a feel for what they book will be like. Excerpts come in two main forms:

- *Chapter excerpts* consist of a single chapter of the book, typically the first chapter.
- *Percentage excerpts* consist of a percentage of the total book such as the first 5%, 10%, or 20%.

What Are They Used For?

Book excerpts are primarily used to hook potential readers so that they will buy your book. They can also warn away readers who are unlikely to like the book and who are therefore more likely to leave negative reviews. They essentially enable the reader to “try before you buy.”

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

Book Giveaways

Excerpts can be quite beneficial because good ones grab the readers interest, making it significantly more likely that they will buy the book. Because the book already exists, you do not write book excerpts but rather select them. Thus, the only cost is in the time it takes for you to select a good representative sample as the excerpt.

What Should It Contain?

Book excerpts should contain the following:

- The title of the book
- A brief description of the excerpt
- A representative sample of the book

Guidelines

- **Make it representative.** Select the excerpt so that it is representative so that the reader does not feel tricked into buying the book (i.e., avoid any hint of ‘bait and switch’).
- **Grab the reader.** Make the excerpt exciting, interesting, or otherwise attractive to the potential buyer.
- **Avoid spoilers.** Do not include spoilers in the excerpts as they will detract from the reading experience of the reader who buys and reads the entire book.
- **Vary the excerpts.** Provide different excerpts as stops on the same [blog tour](#).

Examples

The following is an example excerpt from my book, *Hell Holes: What Lurks Below*.

Once everything was stowed, I followed Mark up the short stairs and into the lavish interior of the business jet. Unlike the cramped commuter planes I usually took when flying up to the oil fields, the Embraer Legacy 500 made first class seem like coach. Either the executive funding our study was desperate to get us up there, or this was the only aircraft the company had left to send. Either way, I was happy for the unexpected upgrade.

Unlike typical airliners, the jet's eight large leather seats were organized around four small tables, two on either side of the cabin. Each table separated two seats, one seat facing the back of the airplane and the other facing forward. Angie and Jill were seated in the first row of the plane leaving the second row seats facing forwards for Mark and me. I'd just sat down opposite my wife when she pointed her finger over my shoulder. Following Mark had prevented me from noticing the unexpected extra person seated in the rear of the cabin. With the satisfied smile of a cat having feasted on canary, there sat Aileen O'Shannon. I wondered whether Angie and Jill had selected this particular seating arrangement so they could glare at the weirdly bewitching beauty in the back. Of course, it may have been to keep Mark and me from being tempted to look at her instead of paying proper attention to our wives.

Book Giveaways

I got up and marched straight to the rear of the plane and said, "I'm sorry, but I never said you could come along on this trip."

"You are?" she asked coyly. "Oh, my. You never said I could not come." She gave me a stunning smile that I'm sure usually got her everything she'd ever asked for. "I naturally took your silence to signify agreement, so I packed my bag and cameras, and here I am. Lucky for you that I did; you wouldn't want to get up there only to realize you needed someone to make a visual record of your discoveries. Besides, I know some of the discoveries the Russians made that they didn't publish."

The co-pilot walked up behind me. "Excuse me, Dr. Oswald. Can you please take your seat now? We're on a very tight schedule, and Mr. Kowalski wants you in Deadhorse as soon as possible."

I looked up front and saw that the cabin door was already closed, and the seat belt signs were on. Before I could answer, the plane began taxiing away from the hangar. Realizing that it was too late to rid ourselves of the reporter, I turned around and took my seat facing Angie.

"I see we still have Miss O'Shannon with us," Angie said with a hint of irritation. "I thought you'd decided we didn't need her."

“I did,” I answered as the plane accelerated down the runway. “But the cabin door was already closed, and we were already moving.”

“Jack, you’re the leader of this study, and this plane wouldn’t even be here if it weren’t for you. The pilot would have turned around if you’d asked him to.”

“You’re right,” I admitted sheepishly, silently cursing my habit of not questioning authority figures, at least not unless it involved science.

“Well, what are you going to do about it?”

Suddenly and for no apparent reason, my annoyance with O’Shannon disappeared, and I felt an overpowering desire to keep her with us, with me. I twisted around and looked back at her. She was staring back at me with a knowing smile. God, she looked so mesmerizingly beautiful as she closed her purse. Of course, she should come...

“Jack... Jack!”

I jerked back around, my heart pounding as I felt my face warming. I was blushing from embarrassment and guilt. I was also confused, unsure of what had just happened.

“Jack, I was talking to you, and you just ignored me! What’s gotten into you?”

BOOK GIVEAWAYS

What Are They?

A *book giveaway* is an event (e.g., a sweepstakes, contest, or other type of promotion) in which free copies of books, either autographed physical books or free downloads of ebooks, are given out. The books given away can be permanently free or can have their price temporarily reduced to zero for the purpose of the giveaway. There are many different types of book giveaways:

- A *basic giveaway* is a book giveaway in which a single author advertises and holds a giveaway of one or more of his or her own books.
- A *blog giveaway* is a book giveaway in which a book blogger advertises and runs a giveaway of one or more of an author's books.
- A *cross giveaway* is a book giveaway in which two or more authors collaborate, with each author advertising and holding a giveaway of the other author's books.
- A *group giveaway* (a.k.a., multi-author giveaway) is a book giveaway in which a book blogger, book store, or book distributor collects a cohesive collection of books from multiple authors for a combined giveaway.
- A *joint giveaway* is a book giveaway in which multiple authors work together to advertise and hold a combined giveaway.

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- A *review giveaway* is a book giveaway in which the author gives free copies of his or her book in exchange for a review of that book.

Regardless of the type of book giveaway, it is typically the author's responsibility to send the book(s) to the winner of the contest unless the book is already free.

What Are They Used For?

Book giveaways are primarily used to increase author and book name recognition, to increase the author's fan base, to hopefully obtain associated book reviews, and to gather email addresses of readers.

Cost/Benefit Table

High			
Medium			
Low			
	Low	Medium	High
	Cost		

It is hard to estimate the size of the benefit from book giveaways because the benefit only tends to come a significant amount of time after the giveaway is over. The cost is a minimal amount of work when ebooks are given away, whereas the cost can be significant when physical books must be purchased and mailed to the winner(s).

What Should It Contain?

A book giveaway should include the following information:

- Book title
- Author name
- Book format (e.g., ebook, paperback, hardback, or audiobook)
- [Book buy links](#) (if free)
- Whether the book is autographed (if physical)
- Number of books being given away
- Date(s) on which the books will be given away

Guidelines

- **Publish winners.** When there are a limited number of books being given away (e.g., autographed books as part of a contest), publish the names of the winners so that everyone sees that there were in fact winners.
- **Consider delivery costs.** Ebooks are much less expensive and less work than shipping physical books. If you are shipping an autographed book as opposed to an ebook, it is important to consider shipping costs which can be prohibitively expensive if shipped to a foreign address. You may therefore want to restrict entrants to being from your country.
- **Be prepared.** Prepare for giving away physical books by keeping a sufficient number of books on hand so that the books can be packaged and mailed within a short time after the giveaway ends.
- **First book as sample.** Give away a free book (e.g., the first book of a series as a free sample) to entice

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

readers into purchasing and reading the rest of the series.

- **Collect contacts.** To collect email addresses for your newsletter and other marketing purposes, use the least expensive version of [InstaFreebie](#) to give away ebooks and make sign-up for the newsletter mandatory.

Examples

- [Goodreads](#) provides support for authors to run contests to give away copies of their books.
- My InstaFreebie giveaway of *Hell Holes: What Lurks Below* can be found at <https://www.instafreebie.com/free/8uvDD>
- Various book bloggers collaborate with [InstaFreebie](#) to host genre-specific group giveaways of its free books. For example, author W.C. Hoffman organized an InstaFreebie [Post-Apocalypse & Thriller Book Giveaway](#).

BOOK INFORMATION SHEETS










What Are They?

A *book information sheet* is a one or two page marketing summary of your book.

What Are They Used For?

A book information sheet is primarily used to convince potential bulk buyers (such as bookstores and libraries) to purchase multiple copies of your book. As such, it is intended to provide these organization's acquisition personnel (i.e., buyers and acquisition librarians) with sufficient information to make purchasing decisions or at least seek additional information.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

As shown in the preceding cost/benefit table, your book's information sheet has a high potential benefit. Although not needed to sell your book through major

online book retailers, it is mandatory if you intend to sell your book to libraries or through independent book stores. Your book's information sheet is also low cost, taking only a couple of hours to create once you have the information it needs to contain. Although it is not needed to sell ebooks via major online bookstores, it is one of the first things you should do when preparing to market your book to bookstores and libraries.

What Should It Contain?

Your book's information sheet should contain the following information:

- **Book Cover** – An image of the front cover of your book.
- **Book Attributes** – A list of the primary defining characteristics of your book including its:
 - **ISBN numbers** for all formats and providers.
 - Page count
 - **Trim size(s)** – The size (width and height) of the physical book.
 - **Formats** – A list of the formats in which your book is available such as hardback, paperback, and ebooks (e.g., Kindle/mobi, Nook/epub, and pdf), and audiobooks
 - **Suggested retail price** – The recommended price of your book when sold individually as opposed to the wholesale price for bulk orders.
 - **Publication date** – The most recent publication date of your book.
 - **Genre(s)** – A list of one or more genre(s) describing the subject matter, setting, or style of

Book Information Sheets

your book.

- **Providers** – A list the various printers, wholesalers, and distributors from which potential buyers can purchase your books. This could include physical books (e.g., [Amazon](#), [CreateSpace](#), and [IngramSpark](#)), ebooks (e.g., Amazon, IngramSpark, [InstaFreebie](#), [Kindle Direct Publishing](#), and [Smashwords](#)), and audiobooks (e.g., Amazon and [Audiobooks](#))
- **Publisher contact information** – This might be you if you are publishing under your own name or it could be your personal imprint if you have created a company for self-publishing your books. Include name, address, phone number, email, and website.
- **About the Book** – One or two marketing paragraphs that describe your book. This is typically a copy of its [book blurb](#). This is a good place to list any awards that your book may have won. This is also a good place to include a small number of [book review pull quotes](#). If your book has a [book trailer](#), this may also be a good place to include a hyperlink to the trailer.
- **About the Author** – A one or two paragraph biography of you as the author.
- **Marketing** – A short list of the actions you are taking to market your book. Book stores and libraries are interested in knowing what you are doing to generate interest in your book. Examples could include all of the.

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- **Cataloging in Print (CIP) Data Block** – If you intend to market your book to libraries, then include your books CIP data block. This will save the acquisition librarians a lot of work to enter your book into their library management system.

Guidelines

- Remember that this is a marketing tool, the purpose of which is to generate sales.
- Make your book information sheet look professional with a well thought-out and pleasing layout, readable font size. Consider using the template provided below.
- Do *not* exceed the front and back of a single standard (e.g., 8.5 by 11 inch) sheet of paper. If practical, keep it to a single page and only use a second page if you include the book's CIP data block.
- Provide it in pdf format so that everyone can view and print it, but only you can modify it.
- Include it as an attachment to marketing emails to potential bulk buyers.
- If you include book review pull quotes in the *About the Book* section, then use the most persuasive and impressive quotes you can. Specifically, concentrate on quotes by other authors, reviews from major prestigious publications (such as [Kirkus Reviews](#)), and the hosts and reviewers of popular book blogs.
- When listing the ISBN numbers of your book, remember to also include the Amazon Kindle ASIN number.

Additional Resources

- [Microsoft Word Template](#)
- [Example](#)

DRAFT

BOOK LAUNCH PARTIES

What Are They?

A *book launch party* (a.k.a., launch party, release party) is a party that is thrown by an author (or book publicist) to celebrate the publication of the book. The three main types of launch parties are:






- *Physical launch parties*, which occur at a physical venue such as a local book store or public library
- *Online (virtual) launch parties*, which take place online, primarily hosted on your author website (and not your personal website). They may also be cohosted on your social media author webpages (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) as well as the websites of book bloggers.
- *Hybrid launch parties*, which simultaneously take place online and at a physical venue

Whereas major publishing houses will organize launch parties for their successful authors, it is up to the indie author to throw his or her own launch parties.

What Are They Used For?

A book launch party typically has two purposes: to celebrate the completion and publication of a new book and to promote the book by announcing its publication to potential buyers and other interested parties.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

The cost of a launch party can vary greatly. Major publishers can host lavish launch parties at expensive venues for famous authors. As an indie author, setting a reasonable budget and staying within that budget is important. Luckily, there is no need to spend lots of money, and one can gather a [launch team](#) to help with the time and effort involved. If well-advertised and attended, book sales from a successful launch should more than cover its cost.

The benefits of a successful launch party can be significant, but also will vary largely depending on how much effort is invested in making the party a success.

What Should It Contain?

Your launch party should have:

- A budget and schedule
- A venue
- Advertising
- Books and [promotional materials](#)
- [Book readings](#)

- [Book signings](#)

Guidelines

- **Set goals.** Set ambitious but realistic, measurable objectives for your launch party such as its target attendance, book sales, newsletter subscriptions, and online webpage views.
- **Set budget.** Set a budget for the launch party that you can afford. It will help you prioritize the potential activities that comprise the party.
- **Order books.** If you are having a physical launch party at which you will be selling or giving away copies of your new book, be sure to order enough copies sufficiently in advance of the party so that they will be sure to arrive in time.
- **Get help.** To help you organize and run the book launch party, form a group of book launch party team (which is *not* the same as your [online book launch team](#).) Ask family, friends, colleagues at work (if appropriate), members of your local book club, and members of your local writers workshop / critique group. Clearly assign responsibilities and tasks to your launch party helpers based on their individual skill set and what they are willing to volunteer to do.
- **Choose the venue.** Select a venue for the launch party based on your goals for the party. The author's home or a local book club meeting may be appropriate for a primarily informal celebration. A local bookstore or library is appropriate for a launch party that is primarily a marketing/sales event. Approach the venue with a [press release](#) and a pitch

Book Launch Parties

explaining why the event is not just good for you, but also for the venue. Consider a venue that is relevant to the genre or subject of your book. Some authors organize online launch parties, either via their website and social media accounts such as Facebook or via a [release day book blast](#).

- **Schedule the party.** Select the date of the launch party based on the availability of the venue and books. Make it on a weekend afternoon or early evening. Develop a schedule such as roughly one to two hours for introductions, book reading, Q&A, giveaway, book signing, and conclusion.
- **Select needed materials.** Select and acquire the materials you will need for the party. This could include a table and chair, copies of your books for sale, pens for autographing your books, sign-up sheet for your [newsletter](#), [author business cards](#), decorations including [book posters](#), tickets for [book giveaways](#), and any [promotional items](#) such as bookmarks. If you are having an online launch party, prepare your posts and tweets ahead of time so that they can be posted over the course of the party.
- **Announce the party.** Advertise the upcoming launch party including book title, author, date, venue, and events. Advertise on your social media (e.g., with a Facebook event), your author website, and email newsletter. Create launch party flyers or posters, and hang them up in local libraries, bookstores, coffee shops, colleges and universities, and community centers.
- **Court local media.** Work to make your launch party a newsworthy event. Distribute launch-specific [press](#)

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

[releases](#) or [press kits](#) to the members of the local media (e.g., newspapers, TV stations, and radio including NPR, community, and college radio stations) at least 2 months in advance. Keep track of who you have notified and follow up with them after a couple of weeks.

- **Invite people.** Personally invite members of your family, your friends and acquaintances, your co-workers, members of your local writing group, and local book clubs. This priming of the pump will lead to further increases in crowd size and excitement. Invite other authors and book bloggers in your genre to your online launch party. Ask those who accept your invitation to promote your launch party on their social media channels.
- **Arrive early.** Arrive at least 30 minutes prior to start time. Reintroduce yourself to the host and set up your table and any decorations. If appropriate, bring refreshments for the attendees.
- **Socialize.** Be friendly and spend a little time talking with each attendee. Let them ask questions about you, your books, and your writing, and answer their questions honestly. Thank them for coming. If they bring copies of your book, then autograph them. Personalize your autograph by asking them to who they want it made out to.
- **Book reading.** Read an excerpt or chapter of your book. If you are not comfortable with public speaking, have someone from your [book launch team](#) read it for you.
- **Make buying easy.** Accept all payment methods including cash, checks, and credit cards. Make it

Book Launch Parties

clear that your books are also available online. For example, I use a simple (and free) [Square](#) card reader with my iPhone.

- **Offer incentives.** Consider offering a discounted book price. Hold a giveaway of one or more autographed copies of your book or free downloads of previous books. Give out promotional items.
- **Take pictures.** Have a member of your launch team take pictures at the party and post them to social media in real time. Make sure that you get photos with any “notable” attendees for promotional purposes.
- **Collect addresses.** Have a signup sheet to collect names and email addresses for your newsletter. Make it voluntary and provide an incentive (e.g., a free download of your book) for signing up.
- **Create a fun environment.** Remember that your launch party is more than a marketing event. It is a celebration of all of the hard work you have invested into writing and publishing your book. Enjoy it, and make it fun for everyone who attends.
- **Acknowledge.** Thank the attendees for coming. Acknowledge the hard work of your book team including your book’s cover designer, copy editor, story editor, and illustrator (if any). Also thank your launch team for their help before and during the launch. Last but not least, thank your readers, especially those who have posted reviews of your book.
- **Throw an after party.** After the official launch party ends, throw a small informal after party at a

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

local restaurant as a way of saying “thank you” to your launch team.

- **Tax write-off.** Keep track of your launch party expenses, keep your receipts, and write the costs off on your taxes as a business expense.

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BOOK LAUNCH TEAMS

What Are They?










Your *book launch team* consists of all of the people who volunteer to help you launch your book. The two main types of book launch teams are:

- A *book launch party team* is a book launch team that helps you plan, prepare for, and run your [book launch party](#)
- An *online book launch team* is a book launch team that helps make the online aspects of your book launch a success.

What Are They Used For?

- *Book launch party team.* The primary purpose of your book launch party team is to share the work load so that your book launch party is more likely to be successful and fun than if you have to do all of the work yourself. They will help make sure that nothing falls through the cracks.
- *Online book launch team.* The primary purpose of your online book launch team is to help you advertise your book launch and to increase its ranking (especially on the appropriate Amazon best seller lists) by simultaneously posting book reviews on release day.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

Having a dedicated book launch team can really help make your book launch and book launch party a success, although it greatly depends on the size of the team and the reliability of the members. Organizing, motivating, and managing an online launch team can involve a lot of effort prior to launch.

What Should It Contain?

The membership of your book launch team will probably be drawn from your:

- Family
- Friends
- Book's beta readers
- Book bloggers and other reviewers
- People on your [author newsletter email list](#)
- Local writers workshop / critique group
- Members of your local book club

Guidelines

- **Provide incentives.** Reward the members of your launch team. In addition to getting an early review copy of the book, consider providing an autographed copy after the launch.
- **Announce enrolment.** Broadly announce the formation of your book launch team (for example, via your author website, author webpages, email newsletter, and personal social media. Make the benefits and responsibilities of membership clear. Include the scheduled launch date.
- **Assign tasks:** Typical tasks for your book launch party team are (1) helping you locate a venue, (2) helping set up and tear down the party at the venue, (3) introducing you, (4) keeping you on schedule, and (5) taking photographs. Typical tasks for your online book launch team include (1) reading the book, (2) posting social media and sending email announcements of coming book launch, (3) signing up for your Internet flash mob (e.g., via [HeadTalker](#) and [Thunderclap](#)) for launch day social media announcement, (4) posting reviews on Amazon and Goodreads on launch day,
- **Develop/supply materials.** Develop a “swipe file” of pre-written launch day social media posts and announcements graphics, and supply to the launch team for reuse on launch day.
- **Supply ARC.** Once the book is complete, provide an Advanced Review Copy (ARC) to each member so that they can read it and prepare a book review prior to launch day.

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- **Maintain communication.** Set up a book launch team webpage (e.g., via a private Facebook group), where you can regularly communicate with your team before and during the launch. Share regular updates that increase in frequency as launch day approaches (e.g., going from weekly to daily). Remind them of the importance of posting their review on launch day. Keep their contact information handy. After the launch, consider notifying the team of any major event such as the book reaching a major milestone or winning an award.
- **Be appreciative.** Thank the members of your launch team for their help before and during the launch. Make sure that you come through with any promised incentives.

BOOK PRICING

What Is It?

Book pricing is the activity of setting the prices of books in order to achieve some goal.

Book giveaway

Book sales

Loyalty discounts

What Is It Used For?

Book pricing is used to achieve various goals such as maximizing sales, maximizing income, increasing name recognition, obtaining reviews, and developing a fan base.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium	😊		
	Low	😐		
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

As shown in the preceding cost/benefit table, your **TBD**.

What Should It Contain?

Your TBD should contain the following information:

- TBD

Guidelines

- TBD.

Additional Resources

- [Example](#)

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BOOK PROMO PICTURES










What Are They?

A *book promotions (promo) picture* is a picture that is used to advertise one of your books.

What Are They Used For?

Your book promo pictures are primarily used in advertising your books to combine the [book cover](#) and [book blurb](#) into a single compact and attractive whole. It is primarily used for internet advertising where screen space, especially on mobile devices such as smart phone and tablets, is limited.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High	Medium	Low
			
			
Low			
Cost			
Low Medium High			

Assuming that you have access to simple drawing programs that allow you to import photos (e.g., of the book cover and background) and write text (the book blurb), then you have all you need and a book promo picture can generally be produced in a matter of minutes. Perhaps the most effort involved will be finding a

suitable background image that is both relevant and will not make the text of the blurb unreadable.

What Should It Contain?

A book promo picture should typically contain the following information:

- [Front cover](#) of your book being promoted
- Rating – the Amazon rating of the book in the form of the number of stars
- Background – a relevant background picture
- The book series, if relevant
- The book genre(s), if not obvious from the book's front cover and book blurb.
- [Book blurb](#) – an extremely short (e.g., one sentence) book blurb

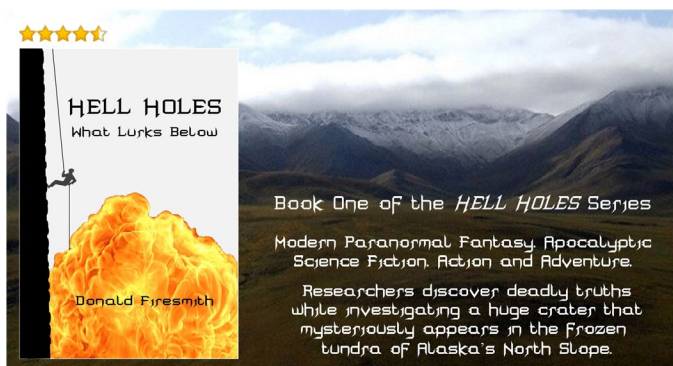
Guidelines

- Keep the book blurb extremely short so that the overall promo picture is not too busy.
- Make the book blurb as catchy as you can.
- Ensure that the font size of the book blurb is sufficiently large enough to read.
- Ensure that there is sufficient contrast between the book blurb and the background picture to ensure its readability.
- Keep the background picture uncluttered so that the book blurb is easier to read
- Use the book promo picture when making social media posts about the book.
- When using the book promo picture on social media posts, turn the picture into a link to a URL where potential readers can buy the book.

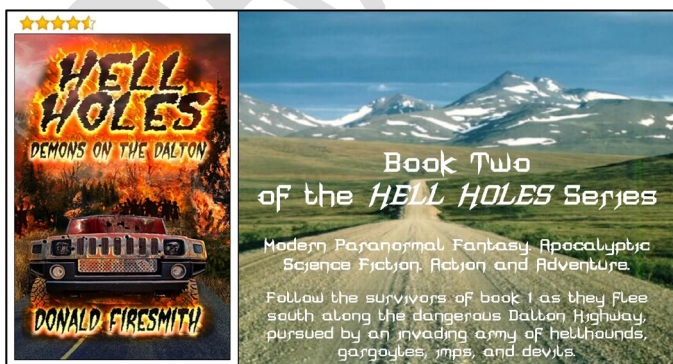
Book Promo Pictures

- Experiment with the text and the background picture until you get the right mix and level of detail.
- Have others (e.g., editors, beta readers, social media contacts) review your promo pictures and provide constructive criticism.

Examples



Promo picture for Hell Holes: What Lurks Below



Promo picture for Hell Holes: Demons on the Dalton

BOOK READINGS

What Are They?

A *book reading* is a public event during which an author reads aloud [excerpts](#) of his or her book(s).

What Are They Used For?

Book readings are primarily used to TBD.

Cost/Benefit Table

High			
Medium	😊	😐	😐
Low	😐	😞	😞
	Low	Medium	High
	Cost		

As shown in the preceding cost/benefit table, your TBD.

What Should It Contain?

Your TBD should contain the following information:

- TBD
- TBD

Guidelines

- **Find a venue.** Some popular venues are libraries and bookstores, especially small independent

Book Readings

bookstores if you are not well known, local book clubs, and universities. Think outside of the box and consider locations that are relevant to your books or the genres in which you write. Contact the store manager, librarian, or organizer well in advance to arrange a date.

- **Promote the event.** Heavily promote the book reading using your author website, author webpages, social media, book blog, and email newsletter. Help the venue promote the event by providing flyers and window posters. Contact the local media with a [press release](#).
- **Select excerpts.** Select several interesting excerpts to read. They can be from a single book or taken from multiple books.
- **Rehearse.** As a form of public performance, book readings will benefit greatly from being rehearsed. Once you've selected your excerpts, read them out loud. Video record your rehearsals, or at least make audio recordings. Watch and listen to yourself and make any needed corrections. Practice to the point that you can often look up, make eye-contact with the audience, and not lose your place. Heavily practice any special aspects such as using different accents and different voices for different characters. Also practice any additional remarks you intend to make, such as how you wrote the book and came up with its plot, settings, and characters.
- Do not read in a monotone, but (with the possible exception of children's books) also don't be overly dramatic.

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- **Copy others.** Listen to and learn from audiobooks by voice actors.
- **Speak clearly.** Speak distinctly, pronouncing your words carefully. Speak loud enough so that people in the back of the room can clearly hear you. Avoid running your words and sentences together. Pause *very* briefly at commas, only slightly longer at periods, and somewhat longer still at the end of paragraphs.
- **Consider duration.** Do not read continuously for more than 10 minutes straight. Break up longer readings with discussion or with questions and answers. Remain aware of the audience and wrap up your reading if you detect them becoming restless.
- **Combine forces.** Join with other local authors to draw a larger crowd.
- **Record and post the reading.** Consider having someone record your reading and post it afterwards on your author website and your YouTube channel.
- **Bring books.** Bring sufficient books for sale after the reading.
- **Sale books.** Accept all forms of payment including cash, check, and credit card.
- **Hold book signing.**
- **Be friendly.** Be friendly, kind, and thankful when people buy your books and request autographs.

Examples

- TBD

BOOK REVIEWS

What Are They?

A *book review* is a short critical description of a book based on an analysis or evaluation of its content, style, and merit. Book reviews are published where potential readers can read them including:


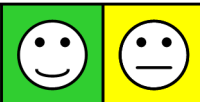




- Posted on the book's webpage on the:
 - Websites of online book stores, such as Amazon and Barnes and Noble
 - Websites of book clubs, such as Goodreads and the Online Book Club
- Posted on book blogs
- Re-posted on the author's website
- Printed on literary magazines

Most book reviews are written by readers who feel sufficiently strong about the book to take the time to provide their opinion of the book. Some book reviews are written by book bloggers who spend a great deal of time writing and posting numerous reviews on their blogs. Some books are professional book reviewers who work for companies (e.g., [Kirkus Reviews](#)) providing book reviews for a fee.

What Are They Used For?

Book reviews are primarily used to tell prospective readers about the book and thereby help them decide whether to procure and read it. Book reviews are also used by bulk book purchasers such as book stores and libraries.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

Book reviews are a major factor readers use when deciding which books to buy. Quite a few advertising options require a book to have a minimum number of Amazon reviews with a minimum average rating.

While it does not take a lot of work to obtain one review, it does take a lot of work to obtain a large number of reviews. Signing up for book tours and directly requesting reviews from book bloggers are both useful ways to obtain reviews while keeping the effort per review reasonable. On the other hand, professional reviews, such as Kirkus reviews can be quite expensive.

What Should It Contain?

A book review should contain *some* of the following information:

- Title – the book's title, subtitle, whether it is part of a series
- Author(s)
- Genre(s)

Book Reviews

- Description – a brief description of what the book is about
- Quality – a brief description of how well the book was written (for example, in terms of plot, characterization, dialog, and writing ability/style)
- Pros and cons – a list of what the reviewer liked about the book, didn't like about the book, and why.
- Rating – the reviewer's overall rating of the book, typically the number of stars on a scale of one to five
- Consider adding photos of the [book's cover](#), the [book's author](#), a link to the [author's website](#), and [buy links](#).

Guidelines

The following are guidelines for reviewers:

- **Hook the reader.** Give the review an interesting title. Hook the reader with the first sentence of the review.
- **Analyze the quality.** What is the quality of the book in terms of its line, copy, and story editing? Are there a significant number of typos and grammar mistakes? Is the writing awkward, choppy, or poorly structured? Are there any holes and inconsistencies in the plot. Are the characters three-dimensional and believable? Does the dialog fit the characters.
- **Avoid spoilers.** Avoid including a detailed synopsis of the book's plot. Do not include spoilers in your book reviews. If you feel that you must include a spoiler, provide an obvious warning to readers.
- **Demonstrate knowledge.** Include sufficient details to clearly convey that you have in fact read the book.

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- **Give your honest opinion.** Give it a star rating that conforms to the venue's rating system, and explain why you gave it that rating. Say what you liked and what you didn't like about the book. What you're your favorite and least favorite parts of the book? State any changes you would like to convey to the author? This makes the book review valuable to both the reader and the author.
- **Make your recommendation.** State whether you would recommend the book in the conclusion of the review. Also mention the types of readers you think would like the book.
- **Review your review.** Before you post it, critically review your review and fix any defects you find. If you discover any problems after it is posted, fix them if you can (e.g., Amazon lets you edit your reviews) or ask the review's publisher (e.g., book blogger) to make the corrections.

The following are guidelines for authors:

- **Remain unbiased.** Keep reviews unbiased.
 - Do not write reviews of your own books.
 - Do not rely on reviews of family members and close friends
 - Do not buy reviews. This rule is a bit fuzzy as nominal fees are sometimes required by organizations to cover the overhead of matching authors with reviewers.
 - Do not attempt to get reviewers to change their minds. Do not argue with reviewers over bad reviews or attempt to get them to remove bad reviews.

Book Reviews

- **Obtain VIP reviews.** Work with VIPs (such as other authors, bloggers of popular book blogs, and major media organizations) to obtain reviews of your book that will carry significant clout with potential readers. Such reviews will also be useful for supplying short testimonial pull quotes for advertising purposes.
- **Be polite.** Politely ask for reviews.
 - Contact appropriate book bloggers to request that they review your book. Follow their review guidelines providing all requested information.
 - Include a “request for review” page at the end of your books
- **Ask readers.** At the end of your books, add a page in which you politely ask your readers for reviews. Explain the value of such reviews to both potential readers and you, the author.
- **Request multiple postings.** Politely ask reviewers to copy their reviews from one venue (e.g., Amazon and Goodreads) to others.
- **Incentivize reviewers.** Ethically incentivize readers to provide reviews. For example, offer free book downloads in exchange for reviews. Thank reviewers by liking their reviews; for example, Amazon has a button you can click on to signify that the review was helpful.
- **Use blog tours.** Order book blog tours that include one or more book reviews.

Additional Resources

- [Reviews of other authors' books](#) on my author website
- [Reviews of my books](#) on my author website

DRAFT

BOOK SALES

What Are They?

A *book sale* is an advertised period during which the book's price is temporarily lowered to increase its sales.










Individual sale

Group sale

What Is It Used For?

The primary reason you decrease the price of your books is to increase sales, which may have numerous indirect benefits such as increasing your name recognition as an author and increasing the number of your book reviews.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

As shown in the preceding cost/benefit table, your TBD.

What Should It Contain?

A book sale typically includes the following:

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- The name of the book
- The book's cover
- The book's new sale price
- The book's original list price
- Optionally, the percentage of the reduction
- The dates/duration of the sale

Guidelines

- TBD.

Additional Resources

- [Example](#)

BOOK SIGNINGS

What Are They?

A *book signing* is a physical in-person event (for example, at a local bookstore, library, or [conference](#)) at which an author's books are sold and autographed. Book signings come in the following forms:





- An *author-as-seller book signing* is a book signing at which the author sells his or her own books. These book signings typically take place at local libraries, book- or genre-related conferences or conventions, small independent book stores, and genre-related businesses (e.g., a bridal store for a book about weddings).
- A *store-as-seller book signing* is a book signing at which the host of the book signing sells the author's books. These book signings typically take place at major book stores (e.g., [Barnes and Noble](#)) or outlet stores (e.g., [Costco](#) and [Sam's Club](#)).

What Are They Used For?

Authors use book signings to meet with readers, develop fans, and sell books, sometimes in outlets that would not otherwise carry the book.

The hosts use book signings to increase sales, increase traffic, and to showcase local authors' books.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High

The success of a book signing largely depends on the number of potential readers who stop at your table and buy your books. Regardless, the immediate financial benefit will likely be small. The total benefit is hard to estimate because you never know how the owning of an autographed copy will affect a reader's future purchases as well as how much it might motivate them to provide word-of-mouth advertising.

The costs involved are primarily the time and effort needed to locate and arrange the venue and then hold the actual signing.

Because of its low return on investment, having a basic book signing is not something that should be high on a beginning author's book marketing to do list.

What Should It Include?

Book signings typically include:

- A venue with associated community relations person
- Advertising (such as [event flyers](#), [book posters](#), and [press releases](#))

Book Signings

- Table and chair for signing and selling books
- Books to sell and autograph
- Pens for autographing books
- [Promotional materials](#) (such as bookmarks and postcards)
- Means to accept payments (such as credit card readers, cash box)

Guidelines

The following guidelines apply prior to the book signing:

- **Offer a professional book.** Unless the book looks professionally-published with a well-designed cover (i.e., it does not “look self-published”), it will likely be impossible for you to convince the store to host the signing.
- **Research local venues.** Identify the local venues (e.g., independent and chain bookstores, other stores selling books, and libraries) that might host book signings. Contact them to see if they host book signings by local authors. If they do, find out the name of their community relations person and ask for their rules/guidelines for authors. Set up an appointment to meet and discuss the potential for your signing.
- **Meet with the store’s decision maker.** Personally meet with the store’s owner, manager, or community relations person. Be able to quickly communicate who you are, your book(s) (including title, genre, [book blurb](#), and ISBN), what you propose (a book signing), and how it will benefit the store and its customers, and how the store can procure copies for

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

the signing (i.e., the book's [distributors](#)). Provide a complementary review copy.

- **Ensure book is returnable.** Major book stores will only purchase books for the signing if any unsold copies can be returned for refund. For small independent book stores and libraries, you will need to bring sufficient copies so that you don't run out.
- **Widely advertise signing in advance.** The book store will typically do very little advertising of the event. It will be up to you to issue press releases to local community newspapers and radio stations. Put up flyers locally at libraries, coffee shops, and restaurants. Contact local book clubs.
- **Obtain books.** If you are selling your own books, make sure that you have sufficient on hand for the signing. It is better to have too many than too few.
- **Obtain [promotional items](#).** Print up a sizable number of bookmarks and/or postcards so that you can hand them out at the book signing.
- **Provide announcements.** Write several public announcements that will be made during the book signings.
- **Be flexible regarding date.** Be very flexible with regard to the date of the book signing. If possible, coordinate your signing with related events (e.g., some libraries emphasize different genres during different months).
- **Determine host responsibilities.** Determine who will supply the books, table, and chair. Ask the host if they will display posters announcing your book signing the week before the event, and if so, provide them with the necessary content. If the host is not

Book Signings

planning on printing up posters, offer to supply them yourself.

- **Ask about advertisers.** Ask the host what local media (e.g., newspapers, radio) they advertise with so that you can send them press releases about the signing.
- **Visit the venue.** Visit the venue several days in advance to familiarize yourself with the location including the location of your signing table and the restrooms, and how to contact a host representative.

The following guidelines apply during the book signing:

- **Arrive early.** Arrive at least 45 minutes prior to the beginning of the book signing to set up the table including books, promotional items, posters, and cashbox (with small bills and coins to make change). Request a brief meeting to speak to the host's employees to let them know who you are and a big about your book(s) so that they are aware of the signing and can help direct people to you.

If appropriate, as the host representative if they would put a stack of your books on the check-out counter. Also remind the cashiers to inform anyone displaying interest that you are there signing books. If you are doing your signing at a bookstore that has copies of your books on their shelves and the bookstore has not already done so, turn a couple of your books so that the front covers are showing instead of the spines.

- **Follow host guidelines.** Book stores and libraries will have significant experience and will have established a process you will need to follow,

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

especially if you ever want to be invited back again or invited to other stores in the same chain. Stick to the planned timeslot, and be sure to packed up and gone well before closing time.

- **Wear a nametag.** Wear a large, easily-readable nametag so that people will know you are the author.
- **Display books.** Ensure that there are at least a dozen books being displayed on the autograph table. You can hide extras under the table if it has a sufficiently large tablecloth.
- **Hand out book.** When someone walks up to the book signing table, hand them a copy of the book and give them a brief synopsis. They are more likely to buy it once they have it in their hands.
- **Provide promotional items.** Bookmarks are very inexpensive; place one in each book. Make them readily available on the signing table. Let people know they can take one. Autograph the bookmark or postcards if they ask you.
- **Make buying easy.** If you are selling your own books, accept all payment methods including cash, checks, and credit cards. Make it clear that your books are also available online. For example, I use a simple (and free) [Square](#) card reader with my iPhone.
- **Offer incentives.** If you are selling your own books, consider offering a discounted book price. Hold a giveaway of one or more autographed copies of your book or free downloads of previous books.
- **Take pictures.** Have someone take pictures at the signing and post them to social media in real time. Ask the purchaser if they would like a photo taken

Book Signings

with you. Take a picture with the manager or community relations representative.

- **Have a signup sheet.** Have a signup sheet for people to leave their names and email addresses as a way of subscribing to your [email newsletter](#).
- **Have reasonable expectations.** Do not expect to sell many books as an unknown indie author. A generic book signing will typically sell less than 10 books over the course of 2-3 hours. Do not expect to make significant money, especially at a small venue.
- **Make it an event.** Instead of a simple generic book signing, make it a significant event. Combine forces with several other local authors to draw a larger crowd. Combine the book signing with a book reading and a contest. Do your book signing at a book-related conference.
- **Be friendly.** Be friendly, kind, and thankful when people buy your books and request autographs.
- **Announce the book signing.** Every half hour during the book signing, have the host make a public announcement that the book signing is taking place. Politely remind the host representative if he or she forgets to regularly make the announcement.
- **Sign unsold copies.** If attending a retailer-as-host book signing, as the manager or community relations person how many copies of your book they would like you to sign before leaving. Always ask because they will not be able to return signed copies.

The following guidelines apply after the book signing:

- **Record the results.** Record the basic information about the book signing, such as venue, date, times,

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

coordinator, and contact information. Also record the results in terms of number of books sold and autographed, number of promotional items handed out, cost and income, and the amount of time invested.

- **Thank the host's representative.** Thank the host's community relations person, who authorized and coordinated your book signing. Send them a brief, personalized, hand-written "thank you" note. Send them an autographed picture (taken during the event) with a suggestion that it be hung in the store
- **Thank the host.** To help forge a good relationship with the coordinator, send a commendation / thank you letter to the that person's manager.

BOOK SPOTLIGHTS

What Are They?

A *book spotlight* (a.k.a., promo post) is a short book-specific online advertisement of a specific book, typically hosted by a [book blog](#).

What Are They Used For?

Book spotlights are used to advertise your book to the audiences of the book blogs that host the spotlights. Spotlights are also used to gain name recognition as an author and to develop a fan base.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High		😊	
	Medium	😊	😐	
	Low	😐		
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

The value of an individual book spotlight depends largely on the audience size of the book blog that hosts the spotlight. Regardless, the value of book spotlights comes in having a regular stream of spotlights. The effort required for an individual book spotlight consists of identifying potential book blogs to host the spotlights, making requests to the bloggers, and providing the

information once they accept your request.

What Should It Contain?

Your book spotlight should contain the following information:

- The [book cover](#)
- The name of the book
- Your name as author
- The [book blurb](#)
- [Book buy links](#)
- Optionally, a [book promotions picture](#)
- Optionally, a [character interview](#)

Guidelines

- **Keep at it.** Getting people to host book spotlights should be an ongoing marketing activity. Spend a little time every few days applying to book bloggers to host a book spotlight for you so that you have at least one book blog a week.
- **Follow directions.** Provide all of the information requested by the bloggers of the book blogs on which you apply to host your book spotlight.
- **Target book blogs.** Target your book spotlights at book blogs that cover books in your genres.
- **Also host your own.** Occasionally, host spotlights on your own books on your own social media webpages and author website's blog. However, do not do this so often that your own blog and social media webpages appear to contain an annoying amount of advertising.
- **Keep records.** Keep a record of all book spotlights so that you can compare them with your record of

Book Spotlights

sales/downloads to provide a measure of effectiveness.

- **Trade spotlights.** If you have a book blog, trade spotlights with other authors who also have blogs.
- **Combine techniques.** Combine book spotlights with other online marketing techniques (such as [author spotlights](#) and [author interviews](#)) as part of [blog tours](#).

Examples

The following are example book spotlights of my books posted on various book blogs: [Are You Afraid of the Dark?](#) (26 February 2016), [Facebook Book Promotions Group](#) (17 March 2016), [Rukia Publishing News](#) (25 September 2016), [Many Books](#) (31 October 2016), [Renee Writes](#) (11 November 2011), [On My Desk](#) (8 December 2016), [Loves Great Reads Blog](#) (9 December 2016), [The Avid Reader](#) (12 December 2016), [Renee's Author Spotlight](#) (12 December 2016), [Home of a Book Lover](#) (15 December 2016), [Angela B. Chrysler](#) (16 December 2016), [The Pages-In-Between](#) (19 December 2016), [Coffeeholic Book Worm](#) (19 December 2016), [Book Reviews Virginia Lee Blog](#) (19 December 2016), [Mythical Books](#) (20 December 2016), [ManyBooks](#) (5 January 2017), [Angela Kay Books](#) (11 January 2017), [Totally Talented Promotions](#) (15-21 January 2017)

BOOK TRAILERS

What Are They?

A *book trailer* is a short (e.g., between 30 seconds and two minutes) movie advertising a book.

What Are They Used For?

Like a movie trailer, a book trailer is used as a video ad for your book.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High		😊	😐
	Medium		😐	😞
	Low	😊	😞	😡
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

The benefit of a book trailer greatly depends on the number of relevant potential readers who see it, and that can be difficult to achieve

What Should It Contain?

Your book trailers should contain the following information:

- Book title and author name

Book Trailers

- A series of slides consisting of text (i.e., the trailer's script similar to your book blurb) over relevant background pictures
- Background
- Optionally (if you can afford it), a voice over reading of the text

Guidelines

- Host your book trailer on YouTube.
- Host your book trailer on you author website and book webpages.
- Ensure that the text is clearly visible and easily readable against the background pictures.
- Use an appropriate font, font sizes, and font color(s)
- Time the duration of each slide so that it is sufficient for the average reader to easily read the text without being too long.
- If using a voice over reading of the script, ensure that the voiceover is clearly audible, understandable, and not drowned out by the background music.
- Unless you have the software and expertise, hire a professional to make the book trailer for you based on your script.
- Ensure that you have the digital rights to use the background pictures and music.

Examples

- [Hell Holes: What Lurks Below](#)

CHARACTER INTERVIEWS

What Are They?

A *character interview* is an interview in which an author answers questions as if he or she were a character in one or more of his or her books.

What Are They Used For?

The marketing use of a character interview is to give the reader interesting and entertaining insights into the character being interviewed. By getting readers more interested in the characters, it increases the likelihood that potential readers will buy the book and that previous readers will buy additional books.

Character interviews are typically posted on book blogs, either individually or as part of a blog tour. They can also be posted on your authors website.

Authors can also use character interviews to better understand their characters.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium	☺		
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

As shown in the preceding cost/benefit table, your TBD.

What Should It Contain?

Like any interview, a character interview consists of a series of interviewer questions and interviewee answers. It is also annotated with the titles of the books in which the character appears.

Guidelines

- **Supply questions.** Book bloggers should give the questions to the authors.
- **Keep interview short.**
- **Check out Proust Questionnaire.**
- **Use Google.** Use a browser to search existing character interviews to find questions that can be reused
-

Additional Resources

- [Proust Questionnaire](#)

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CONFERENCES

What Are They?

A *conference* is a formal meeting where people meet over the course of one or more days to discuss and learn about a specific subject such as how to write and publish books or a specific genre of books, movies, and television shows. Authors are typically

- An *author conference* (a.k.a., writers' festival) is a conference that is primarily aimed at helping authors become more successful.
- A *book conference* is a conference at which publishers and agents showcase books and their authors to representatives from book stores, libraries, and the media (e.g., book critics).
- A *book fair* (a.k.a., book festival, literary festival) is an informal book-related conference primarily oriented towards the reader community where members of the public go to see, hear, and meet authors. Some book fairs are very small and informal, little more than half a dozen local authors spending the afternoon at a community library autographing books and performing book readings.
- A *book trade show* is a conference that is often run by a trade association and is primarily intended for independent booksellers, book wholesalers, publishers and other industry professionals.
- *Genre or themed conference* such as a science fiction convention, comic convention, black authors convention, local authors, children's books

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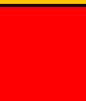
- An *On-line conference* is a virtual conference that takes place totally on line rather than at a physical location. Such conference can be much less expensive than physical conferences, especially when you consider conference fees (online conferences do not have to rent expensive conference rooms), hotel costs, and transportation costs.

What Are They Used For?

Authors primarily attend author or book conferences to:

- Learn about writing and publishing
- Meet and network with other authors and conference attendees
- Find cover artists, illustrators, and different types of editors for their books
- Find a literary agent to help them sell their books
- Find a publishers to buy their books
- Have fun with their peers

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

Conferences

The biggest business benefit from attending a conference comes from the contacts you make with people who can help you become a more successful author. Will you probably also learn a lot of valuable information about improving your writing and publishing your books. You may also make life-long friends among the other authors. Note also that the benefits from making these friends and acquaintances may manifest themselves over multiple years.

The biggest problems with attending conferences is their high cost, which includes conference registration, travel, hotel, and meals.

What Should It Contain?

Author and book conference typically have many of the following:

- A large number of attendees including authors, cover artists, literary agents, publicists, acquisition editors, copy and story editors, voice actors for audio books, book bloggers, reading members of the public, members of relevant media outlets, and sales representatives of companies offering writing-related services
- Numerous events such as presentations by speakers, panels, tutorials, workshops, book readings, book signings, meals, and the main banquet(s)
- Book vendors

In addition to the above, genre conferences (such as science fiction conferences) will also have actors from relevant movies and TV shows.

Guidelines

- **Identify conferences.** Every year, there are literally more than a hundred book conferences, fairs, and festivals scattered across every state and many countries around the world. Use your favorite browser to search the Internet to identify the conference(s) you want to attend. Consider attending local conferences to save money.
- **Share your knowledge.** Prepare a presentation and propose it to the conferences at which you are interested in speaking.
- **Plan ahead.** Get a copy of the conference schedule and decide on the events you wish to attend. There are often multiple competing tracks requiring you to decide which ones you most want to attend.
- **Stay local.** If you can afford it, stay in the conference hotel where you will be able to meet more attendees. The conference typically obtains a block of rooms, which the hotel will typically offer at a lower conference rate if you book your room sufficiently early.
- **Enjoy yourself.** Consider the conference to be a mini-vacation where you can combine business and pleasure.
- **Mingle.** Be friendly and mingle with the other attendees. Walk up and introduce yourself, especially to people (e.g., authors, cover artists, and acquisition editors) you want to meet. Network and develop contacts with your peers and with those who can help you write and sell your books. During the meals, try to sit next to people you especially want to meet.

Conferences

- **Collect autographs.** Take a few books by your favorite authors whom you know will be attending the conference. Asking for autographs is often a nice excuse to meet and talk to them.
- **Hand out business cards.** Hand out copies of your [author business cards](#) to the people you meet
- **Sell your books.** Consider renting a booth at genre conferences to sell autographed copies of your books and recoup part of the costs of attending the conference.
- **Stay on budget.** Carefully consider all of the costs associated with attending the conference when creating a budget.
- **Keep records.** Keep good records of all of your expenses so that you can claim them as business expenses on your taxes.
- **Consider virtual attending.** There are companies that will promote your book at various major international book conferences. If you can't physically attend, consider hiring someone to "attend" for you. Warning: these companies charge a lot of money (relatively speaking) and I have no experience regarding whether such virtual attendance is a cost-effective way to promote your book(s).

Examples

I attend the online conference, [Brain to Books Cyber Convention](#), and I would recommend them as very reasonably priced and cost-effective.

- [Indie Bookfest](#) (US)
- [Self-Publishing Conference](#) (UK)

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- [Important Book Events: Fairs, Festivals, and Conferences](#)

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DIRECT EMAILS



What Are They?

A *direct email* is an email sent directly from the author to potential or actual readers of the books.

What Are They Used For?

Direct emails are primarily used to directly communicate small amounts of information directly to the people on your email list.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High

As shown in the preceding cost/benefit table, your TBD.

What Should It Contain?

Your TBD should contain the following information:

- TBD

Guidelines

- TBD.

Additional Resources

- [Example](#)

EMAIL LISTS










What Are They?

An *email list* is a list of email addresses, typically of potential readers who have signed up to receive [email newsletters](#) or [direct emails](#) from an author about book-related events such as contests and giveaways.

What Are They Used For?

Your email list enables you to contact people who have already expressed interest in your books and who are therefore more likely to purchase more of your books.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

As shown in the preceding cost/benefit table, your TBD.

What Should It Contain?

Your email list should contain the following information:

- First and last name

- Email address

Guidelines

- Be polite when asking people to provide their information.
- Provide an incentive (e.g., a free book download or price discount) to sign up.
- Keep the sign-up form clear and easy to find. Don't hide it at the bottom of a long webpage.
- Do not ask for excessive personal information (e.g., phone number and physical address) that people will feel uncomfortable giving.
- Provide a valuable service (newsletter with useful interesting content or price discounts) in exchange for the reader providing their email address.
- Allow people to unsubscribe. Also provide an easy way (e.g., check boxes) for them to explain why they are unsubscribing.
- After signing up, send the people to either your home page or the webpage from which they navigated to the sign-up form.
- Make the sign-up webpage interesting. Consider adding author- or book-related graphics to an otherwise blank form.
- Use a tool (e.g., Email Chimp) to automatically collect and maintain the entries of your email list.
- Consider temporarily using pay versions of advertising tools (e.g., InstaFreebie) during major advertising campaigns to collect email addresses.

Additional Resources

- [Example](#)

Email Lists

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EMAIL NEWSLETTERS










What Are They?

An *email newsletter* (a.k.a., *eNewsletter* and *e-newsletter*) is a newsletter in the form of an email that is typically regularly sent to subscribers (e.g., fans, potential readers of your books, and other authors).

What Are They Used For?

From a marketing perspective, an email newsletter is primarily used to gain name recognition as an author and to advertise books. For authors of non-fiction books, it is a good venue for articles that increase your credibility as a subject matter expert.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High	Medium	Low
			
			
Low			
Cost			
Low			
Medium			
High			

The cost benefit ratio of using email newsletters to promote your book can vary all over the map. The benefit primarily depends on the size of the newsletter subscription and whether the newsletter targets the genres of your book. Having a large subscriber list has

Email Newsletters

little value if the subscribers are not interested in the types of books you write. Similarly, the costs can vary greatly depending on whether you are creating and maintaining your own newsletter or are depending on others' newsletters. Finding organizations that connect authors and newsletters, such as [Newsletter Swap](#), can help, but some such organizations have both a limited free and an unlimited pay version that can get expensive.

What Should It Contain?

The content of an email newsletter can contain the same kind of information on finds in a book blog including news and promotions:

- News (e.g., book status and event calendar)
- Blog posts from the [author's book blog](#)
- Articles on the subject matter of your books
- Articles on your writing
- [Guest blog posts](#)
- [Author interviews](#)
- [Author spotlights](#)
- [Book cover reveals](#)
- [Book excerpts](#)
- [Book reviews](#)
- [Book spotlights](#)
- [Book trailers](#)

Guidelines

- Make it very easy for people to subscribe to your newsletter. Create a newsletter subscription webpage with a sign up form. Include links to your sign up form on your [author website](#), your [author webpages](#), your author blog, and your [author email signature](#).

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

Set expectations on your subscription webpage by describing the newsletter's content and frequency.

- Also include an unsubscribe option. Keep track of your unsubscribe rate.
- Use your social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Google+, and Twitter) to regularly advertise the existence of your newsletter.
- Create/reuse a standard template for your newsletter. This saves you time and avoids confusing the reader.
- Include author branding in the form of a banner and color scheme.
- Vary the newsletter's email subject line so that it gives the receiver a reason to open the email and does not become boring.
- Keep the newsletter's sender name constant and intuitive.
- Vary the types of content.
- Include sufficient useful content to make it worthwhile for readers to subscribe to and read it. If the unsubscribe rate is more than 5%, take a look at your content to ensure that it is adequately interesting, entertaining, and useful.
- Keep at least 90% of the content entertaining and useful and no more than 10% promotional.
- Reuse existing content such as blog posts from your author [book blog](#).
- Include links to your [author website](#) and [buy links](#) to your books.
- Minimize the size of photos so that your newsletter will load fast. Provide photos with textual names using the alt tag for cases where the subscribers' email programs do not display the photo.

Email Newsletters

- Measure the effectiveness of your newsletter's buy links by monitoring the click-through rate, which should be approximately 2-5%.
- Keep the design concise and uncluttered so that the newsletter will not take long to read. Consider placing only short summaries in the newsletter together with links to the full versions in the form of a webpage of your author's website. This will enable the reader to select only the content that he or she is interested in.
- Email the newsletter to yourself so that you can proofread it and verify that all of its links work before sending it to its subscribers.
- Publish the newsletter on a regular basis, typically once a week or once a month.
- Use an email marketing tool such as <http://mailchimp.com> as a way to automate collecting subscriber information, maintaining your subscriber list, and emailing your newsletters.
- Consider joining a newsletter website, for example <https://www.newsletterswap.com>, that connects authors with newsletters in their genre.

GROUP PROMOTIONS

What Are They?

A *group promotion* is a promotion that are hosted by a group of collaborating authors.

Group promotions can occur on the authors' [author websites](#), [author webpages](#), [book blogs](#), [direct emails](#), and [email newsletters](#). The eight main types of group promotions are:

- A *cross advertisement* is a group advertisement in which each author hosts his own advertisement (such as an author interview, author spotlight, or book spotlight) intended to increase the *sales* of the other authors' books, but not his own.
- A *cross [contest](#)* is a group contest in which each author hosts his own contest having the other authors' books, but not his own, as prizes.
- A *cross [giveaway](#)* is a group giveaway in which each author hosts his own book giveaway of the other authors' books, but not his own.
- A *cross [sale](#)* is a group sale in which each author hosts his own sale of the other authors' books, but not his own.
- A *joint advertisements* is a group advertisement in which all authors in the group host the same advertisement (such as an author interview, author spotlight, and book spotlight) intended to increase the *sales* of the books of all of the authors.
- A *joint contest* is a group contest in which all authors in the group host the same contest having

Group Promotions










copies of one or more books from each author as the prize(s).

- A *joint giveaway* is a group giveaway in which all authors host the same book giveaway of books from each author.
- A *joint sale* is a group sale in which all authors in the group host the same sale of books from each author.

What Is It Used For?

Teaming is intended to increase the reach and therefore effectiveness of book promotions and giveaways by combining the audiences of all authors in the team. In turn, this increases name recognition of the author and the books being advertised as well as the likelihood that book reviews will be posted for those books.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

The benefit from taking part in a group promotion can be substantial, being directly proportional to the size of the group, the size of the audience of each member in the group, the lack of overlap between these audiences, and

the relevance of the audience in terms of genre(s).

The cost to take part in any single group promotion is pretty trivial, being merely the effort involved in finding the group, coordinating with the other members of the group, and publishing the actual promotion to your audience.

What Should It Contain?

Your group promotion should consist of the following.

- An advertisement for the coming group promotion to generate interest
- The group promotion itself

Guidelines

- **Target by genre.** When selecting the members of the team, choose authors who write books in the same or similar genres (e.g., romance and speculative fiction) and who's readers therefore are likely to read the same types of books.
- **Advertise the promotion.** Advertise the promotion ahead of time in order to generate interest and excitement.
- **Keep it simple.** Many group giveaways and sales involve nothing more than a banner followed by a grid of thumbnails of the books' covers acting as graphic links to the books being given away or sold at a lower promotional price.
- **Promote simultaneously.** Have all of the authors run their advertisements and giveaways on the same day or over the same time period. This increase the rate at which books are bought or downloaded, thereby increasing their rank on Amazon, possibly to

Group Promotions

the point where the book is listed on one or more best seller lists. Books by different members of the team may be purchased by the same customer, thereby increasing the likelihood of them being listed on “Customers who bought this item also bought” lists. Use tools (such as [MailChimp](#)) to preschedule the promotions.

- **Maximize team membership.** The size of the potential audience increases with the number of authors in the team.
- **Joint beats cross.** It is typically better to take part in a joint group promotion than a cross group promotion because it involves less work (only a single common promotion) and all books are promoted by all members of the group. The only reason to hold a cross promotion instead is that it removes any hint of conflict of interest.

Examples

- TBD

GUEST BLOG POSTS


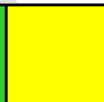




What Are They?

A *guest blog post* is a blog post written by an author but hosted on someone else's [book blog](#) rather than your own [author website's](#) book blog.

What Are They Used For?

Your guest blog post is primarily used to gain name recognition as an author and to demonstrate your knowledge of some topic such as book writing or the subject of your non-fiction books.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High		
	Medium		
	Low		
		Low	Medium
		Cost	

The benefit of a guest blog post is directly proportional to the blog's readership and the relevancy of the blog (e.g., its book genres) to your books. It takes a moderate amount of time and effort to write a good guest blog post, and this is time and effort that you could instead spend on writing your own books.

What Should It Contain?

Your TBD should contain the following information:

- TBD

Guidelines

- Because publishing a book blog can be a lot of work, book bloggers are often very appreciative of authors who are willing to supply guest blog posts. In exchange for providing blog posts, book bloggers are often inclined to post author and book promotions such as author and book spotlights, book excerpts, and book reviews.
- Concentrate on writing guest blog posts for book blogs that concentrate on your genres of books and that have a reasonably large following. Note that while the first is easy to identify, the second is more difficult and may need to be estimated based on the popularity of the book blogger and the longevity of the blog.
- If you write non-fiction, use your guest blog to demonstrate your expertise in the subject matter of your book.
- Keep your guest blog post to roughly the same length as the other posts to the blog. A good length is between one and three pages.

- TBD

Additional Resources

The following are example guest blog posts I have written for various book blogs:

- [My Long Road to Becoming an Indie Author](#)

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- [Research for Writing Fiction](#)

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MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

What Are They?





A [book] *marketing campaign* is a specific well-defined series of coordinated activities used to market one or more books during a specific time interval. The books can be new books, new editions of existing books (possibly with new covers), or existing books, the sales of which have slumped. Marketing campaigns may last one or more days, weeks, or even months. Marketing campaigns can be run by the author, the author's publisher (if any), the author's publicist (if any), or a book promotions company.

What Are They Used For?

A marketing campaign can be used to:

- Increase book sales or downloads
- Increase a book's rank
- Increase an author's fan base
- Promote an author's [branding](#)
- Test a new marketing channel such as a new book distributor or book store
- Test a new marketing tool such as [group promotions](#)

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

The benefits and cost of a marketing campaign can vary greatly depending on the campaign's goals, budget, duration, and activities. However, even a relatively small marketing campaign will probably take a moderate amount of effort to run.

What Should It Contain?

A marketing campaign should contain the following:

- A marketing plan that specifies the specific planned marketing activities and duration
- A marketing budget
- The actual marketing activities

Guidelines

- **Have a plan.** Develop a basic marketing plan. As the saying goes, “Those who fail to plan, plan to fail.
- **Identify your audience.** Identify the primary target audience for your marketing. For example, is it new readers, existing readers or reviewers you want to reward, or new subscribers to your newsletter?

Marketing Campaigns

- **Set specific goals.** Have specific realistic goals you want the marketing campaign to achieve. For example, set a specific increased number of books sold over previous equal length time period. Don't set them your goals so high that it is impossible for you to succeed. On the other hand, don't set them so low that you could achieve it by mere chance
- **Have a budget.** Have a realistic budget and stick to it. Limit the number of high cost / low benefit marketing tools.
- **Coordinate activities.** Select a set of coordinated marketing activities that tend to reinforce each other.
- **Limit activities.** Limit the campaign's total number of marketing activities to a reasonable value. Don't try to boil the ocean. Fewer activities will make it easier to determine what activities were both effective and cost-effective and which ones were not.
- **Announce the campaign.** Announce your campaign widely such as on your [author social media webpages](#), [author website](#), [author book blog](#), and [direct emails](#).
- **Keep records.** Record expenses and compare them to your budget. Define your key performance parameters (e.g., number of books sold per day and number of subscribers added to your newsletter). Track your progress towards your goals by regularly measuring how well you achieve them during the course of the campaign.
- **Follow up.** If you have added new subscribers to your newsletter or obtained new email addresses for direct emails, follow up with these new readers and

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

thank them for joining your fan base. Consider rewarding them (for example, with a free download or exclusive content such as short stories).

- **Repeat success.** Regularly repeat those parts of the marketing campaign that were successful and cost effective.

Additional Resources

- A [blog tour](#) with its numerous promotions at multiple stops (i.e., [book blogs](#)) can be considered as a cohesive and popular marketing campaign.

MARKETING METRICS

What Are They?

A *marketing metric* is a **TBD** that is measured to determine the cost, effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness of your marketing tasks.

What Are They Used For?

Your TBD is primarily used to TBD.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High		😊	😐
	Medium	😊	😐	😞
	Low	😐		
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

As shown in the preceding cost/benefit table, your TBD.

What Should It Contain?

Your TBD should contain the following information:

- TBD

Guidelines

- TBD.

Additional Resources

- [Example](#)

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MARKETING PLANS










What Are They?

A *marketing plan* is a comprehensive planning document that outlines the marketing activities to be performed to achieve specific marketing objectives within a specific time frame, such as a calendar or fiscal year.

What Are They Used For?

The primary purpose of a marketing plan is to force you to consider your potential marketing activities, prioritize them, and decide on which ones to concentrated on next. Your marketing plan charts your path to success. As the saying goes, “Those who fail to plan, end up planning to fail.” Your marketing plan acts as your [marketing to-do-list](#) on steroids, stating not only what you plan on doing but also how you plan on doing it.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

With a little due diligence, a marketing plan can be very

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

beneficial in terms of achieving the author's marketing goals. Perhaps, more importantly, a lack of planning can lead to ineffective and wasteful marketing as well as lost opportunity costs.

The cost of an individual author's marketing plan should be relatively small, with the planning taking far more time than the actual writing of the plan.

What Should It Contain?

Your marketing plan should have the following structure and contents (although the content of each section may be may be as small as one or a few paragraphs):

- *Goals.* Your prioritized quantified marketing goals such as increased income, increased name recognition, increased fan base, and increased number of reviews and usable praise quotes
- *Audience.* A list of the intended audience of your planned marketing activities such existing readers, new readers, other authors, book critics, and book bloggers as well as agents and traditional publishers (for [hybrid authors](#))
- *Marketing research.* Your plans for investigating what other authors, especially successful ones, in your genre(s) are doing to market their books
- *Pricing.* Your plans for setting the price of your work (e.g., books, short stories, and articles), including your publishing and distribution costs, [sale prices](#), and [giveaways](#)
- *Distribution.* A list of the ways you plan to deliver your writing to your readers, such as [book distributors](#), [author website](#), [author webpages](#), [author book blog](#), [eNewsletter](#), and other's book blogs

Marketing Plans

- *Promotions strategy.* A list of the ways you plan to obtain new readers, such as press releases
- *Online marketing strategy.* A list of the online-specific marketing activities such as your planned use of social media including any [social media advertisements](#) as well as the way you will use keywords and [search engine optimization](#) to expand the audience of your [author website](#), [author webpages](#), author [book blog](#), and author newsletter
- *Marketing campaigns.* A list of major planned marketing campaigns including for each a brief description including purpose, activities, and dates
- *Marketing materials.* A list of all of your marketing materials such as [author business cards](#), [author photographs](#), [book event flyers](#), [book promo pictures](#), posters, and [promotional materials](#)
- *Partnering strategy.* A list of the ways you plan to partner with other authors (e.g., [group promotions](#) and [anthologies](#)) and book bloggers (e.g., [blog tours](#) and [guest blog posts](#))
- *Conversion strategy.* A list of the ways you plan to turn prospective customers into actual customers such as [praise quotes](#)
- *Referral strategy.* A list of the ways you plan to encourage current readers to refer others to you such as free content, coupons for free downloads of older books, and discounted prices of newer books
- *Retention strategy.* A list of the ways you plan to motivate current readers to buy additional books, including such techniques as loyalty discounts, exclusive content (e.g., short stories and character

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

interviews), and a subscription to your monthly newsletter

- *Marketing budget.* A budget including total amount for the plan's duration as well as how it is allocated across marketing activities and month
- *Financial projection.* The estimated costs, income, and profit based on your planned marketing activities
- *Record keeping.* The marketing metrics you plan to collect and analyze to determine the degree of success of your marketing plans

Guidelines

- **Have a vision.** What is your vision for your career and life as an author? Where do you see yourself in a year, in two years? Build your marketing plan out of activities that will help you achieve your vision.
- **Remember its audience.** The marketing plan of a corporation has a large and varied audience including both executive and middle-management, members of the board of directors, the staff of the marketing and advertising departments. An indie author's marketing plan essentially has an audience of one. With the possible exception of his significant other, the author will use it to communicate only with himself, to remind himself of his marketing goals and what he needs to do to achieve them. Therefore, the marketing plan should be written in a style and to a level of detail that best communicates with himself.
- **Keep it small.** An individual indie author does not need the same broad scope, level of detail, and

Marketing Plans

formality as a large or even medium-sized company. Typically, three to five pages suffice. Keep it simple and relatively informal.

- **Limit the duration.** While you can include a short section on the next two to four, concentrate on the next calendar or fiscal year.
- **Planning before plan.** Concentrate on the planning rather than the resulting plan. As President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the man in charge of planning the Allied invasion of Europe during World War II, said, “Plans are nothing. Planning is everything.” This is especially true for authors, whose marketing plans will be relatively small and simple.
- **Be realistic.** No one can do everything at once. Limit the planned marketing activities to what is actually achievable within time and budget constraints. You need to achieve a good balance between writing and marketing. Without adequate time writing, there will be nothing to market; without adequate time marketing, your books won’t effectively reach their potential readers.
- **Keep it current.** A marketing plan should be a living document that changes as your marketing goals and strategies change and as you learn of new marketing techniques and opportunities.

MARKETING TO DO LISTS

What Are They?

A *marketing to do list* is a to do list of all of the marketing-related tasks you intend to perform.

What Are They Used For?

Your TBD is primarily used to TBD.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium	😊		
	Low	😐		
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

As shown in the preceding cost/benefit table, your TBD.

What Should It Contain?

Your TBD should contain the following information:

- TBD

Guidelines

- TBD.

Additional Resources

- [Example](#)

DRAFT

NETWORKING

What Is It?

Networking is the sum of the activities that you perform to develop personal relationships with people, who might be able to support your writing career.





Your social network of supporters should include:

- Influencers such as other authors, [book bloggers](#), [newsletter](#) publishers, literary critics, Amazon top reviewers, editors, and cover designers
- Readers such as beta readers, potential and previous reviewers of your books, members of book clubs, potential [launch team](#) members, and the members of your fan base

What Is It Used For?

Networking with authors, book bloggers, and beta readers enables you to gather a group of people you can rely on to support your writing and to help you market your books.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

Effective networking has many significant benefits including help in obtaining [book reviews](#), [praise quotes](#), increased visibility and name recognition, constructive criticism, and help with book launches. Influencers in your network can also act as mentors, especially for relatively inexperienced and physically isolated indie authors. As with many things, you get out of it what you put into it and you will get more if you first give.

The cost is primarily in the effort you invest in developing your network of resources and keeping them happy.

What Should It Contain?

Networking includes:

- Identifying and meeting with potential members of your author network
- Developing professional and personal relationships with them
- Attending book-related events

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- Supporting other authors including providing book reviews, being a beta reader, collaborating on group promotions
- Supporting book bloggers by providing content such as [author interviews](#), [author spotlights](#), [book excerpts](#), [book spotlights](#), [character interviews](#), [guest blog posts](#)

Guidelines

- **Focus.** Concentrate on developing relationships with influencers and readers who are in the same genre(s) as you as their support will be especially beneficial. Keep an author's network contact list in which you record their names, the titles of their major books, book blogs, and email newsletters, their websites, and their email addresses.
- **Search for influencers.** Use your favorite search engine to look for authors, book blogs, and newsletters in your genre(s). Check out online websites where authors hand out such as [Goodreads](#), various [Facebook](#) author groups, and the [Writer's Café](#).
- **Remember the Golden Rule.** Support other authors, book bloggers, and email newsletter publishers as you would have them support you.
- **Give to get.** When networking with authors, book bloggers, and other influential people, support them before asking them to support you. Offer to be a beta reader and to review Advanced Reader Copies (ARCs) of their new books. Diplomatically provide honest and constructive criticism that enables them to improve their books. Post honest reviews on

Networking

multiple sites (e.g., Amazon and Goodreads), and if your reviews are positive, contact the authors and directly let them know you liked their book. If you have a book blog, offer to host their author and book spotlights, author and character interviews, and guest blog posts. Offer to write guest blog posts and supply author and character interviews for authors and bloggers who have book blogs and email newsletters; they are often looking for material to post. Once you've proven yourself useful, they are much more likely to reciprocate, often without even needing to be asked.

- **Collaborate with other authors.** Other authors in your genre(s) are not competitors, but rather potential collaborators. Work with them to set up and run cross and joint [group promotions](#) such as contests and giveaways. However, you may want to ensure that they have a sufficiently large email list to make collaboration worthwhile. To do this, start by checking to see if they are collecting email addresses, for example by looking for a signup form on their author websites. Also check on the popularity of the author's website, blog, or newsletter in terms of author website traffic by using a site such as www.similarweb.com. You can also get an idea of their popularity by checking to see if their webpages are being shared on social media and generating comments.
- **Use social media.** Use Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to connect with potential influencers. Share and retweet their interesting posts and reply to their messages.

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- **One at a time.** Incrementally develop your network one person at a time. This allows you to devote the necessary time to cultivate their friendship and support.
- **Prepare.** If you know you are going to meet an author, then read at least one of his or her books ahead of time. Similarly, read several book blog postings and issues of [email newsletters](#) before connecting with the blogger and newsletter publishers. Then when you introduce yourself, you can interject something about the book, book blog, or newsletter and thereby show your genuine interest. If the book is good, then post a book review that includes potential praise quotes. Then email the author letting them know you did; they will likely appreciate it and be more likely to help you in the future.
- **Be honest.** Avoid false praise and an “I helped you so you owe me” mentality. Offer to trade *honest* book reviews, but realize that some authors will not reciprocate as a matter of principle due to the potential for conflict of interest.
- **Start local.** Don’t forget to take advantage of local resources such as book clubs, genre-specific clubs, and writing workshops/groups. When possible, attend local book readings, book launches, and library events. Unless you live in a really small town, there will be local people you should add to your support network.
- **Attend conferences.** Go to relatively-local [book-related conferences](#), book fairs, and writer’s workshops. Remember that you are primarily going

Networking

to learn and develop relationships, not to sale your books (unless, of course, you have a sales booth at a book expo).

- **Network with beta readers.** Cultivate a group of people who can be beta readers of your books.
- **Be reliable.** Keep your promises to the members of your network. Meet their deadlines and provide bloggers and newsletter publishers with exactly the content they request.
- **Be realistic.** Have realistic expectations. You won't be able to develop a mutually-beneficial relationship with everyone you try. Don't get discouraged or take it personally when it don't work out; there are many reasons for failure such as their work load, writing schedule, personality, and personal opinion of your work. Success will come from perseverance and takes time.
- **Be friendly and outgoing.** Am my mother used to say, you catch more flies with honey than with vinegar. If you are an introvert or shy, practice. The more you keep at it, the easier and more natural networking will become.
- **Measure success.** Consider keeping a spreadsheet that keeps track of such things as number of what you've done for others, how much time you spent, what they've done for you, and any associated measures of success (e.g., number of clicks and number of sales generated).
- **Be a friend.** Networking is not just about forming relationships with people who can help your writing career. It is also about developing friendships with people who understand you.

PRAISE QUOTES





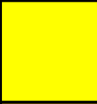



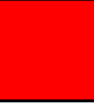
What Are They?

A *praise quote* is a quotation that praises either a book or an author.

What Are They Used For?

Praise quotes are used to convince potential readers that a book is worth reading or that an author writes books worth reading. Praise quotes add credibility.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

Praise quotes, especially for influential people like other authors, Amazon top reviewers, and reviewers for major organizations (e.g., Kirkus Reviews), can have a very significant positive impact on sale. This is particularly true if they are widely publicized on your author website, in the front matter of your books, and associated with your book blurbs.

Luckily, the effort involved to publicize your praise

quotes once you have them is quite low. The primary effort is in obtaining them in the first place, and that effort is essentially what you would expend anyway to obtain book reviews from influencers.

What Should It Contain?

Praise quotes should contain the following:

- The actual quote
- The source/author of the quote

Guidelines

- **Search reviews.** Search through the reviews on your book's webpages on Amazon, other bookstores, and Goodreads for potential praise quotes. Finding praise quotes is one of the many reasons why it is always good to read your books' reviews. Don't just look at five star reviews; sometimes, three and four star reviews contain good praise quotes.
- **Add to blurbs.** Include praise quotes at the end of [book blurbs](#).
- **Add to book.** Include praise quotes in the front matter of your books.
- **Add to spotlights.** Include praise quotes in [author spotlights](#) and [book spotlights](#).
- **Emphasize VIPs.** Use praise quotes from the most influential sources first. In decreasing order of importance, use praise quotes from famous authors, other authors, major official reviewers (e.g., Kirkus reviews), book bloggers, and average users. Do not use praise quotes from friends and family members and definitely do not write your own praise quotes

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- **Mention author's books.** When using praise quotes from authors who are not well known, list one or more of their most popular books after their name.

Additional Resources

For example, the following are example praise quotes from my book *Hell Holes: What Lurks Below*:

- “I enjoyed my time in Firesmith’s world. I did not want to leave. I really got a kick out of it, and would happily come back for more. Recommended.”

MJ Kobernus, author of *The Guardian: Blood in the Sand*

- “This book rocks.”

Barton Paul Levenson, author of *Dark Gods of Alter Telluria*

- “a quick, enjoyable read. Full of action and fraught with danger”

Dave Robertson, author of *Strange Hunting*, *Strange Hunting II*, and *The Brave and The Dead*

- “The book is an easy and quick read and an action-filled one that you’ll imagine as a TV series or a movie with no difficulty.”

Olga Núñez Miret, author of *Escaping Psychiatry*

PRESS KITS

What Are They?





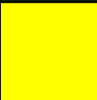




A *press kit* is a collection of digital information about you the author and your books in a form that is useful for members of the press. Press kits come in the following two forms:

- Author-specific press kits
- Book-specific press kits

What Are They Used For?

The primary purpose of a press kit is to provide a simple and easy way for members of the press (e.g., local reporters, literary critics, and professional book reviewers) to find everything they need to know about you and your book(s) in a single, easy-to-use form.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

The benefit from a press kit largely depends on whether you can find a compelling reason why a member of the media should write a story about you or publish a book

review one of your books. The effort involved is minimal as most of the components of a press kit are individually useful and should already exist.

What Should It Contain?

An author-specific press kit should contain the following:

- [Author biography](#)
- [Author photographs](#)
- List of books
- [Praise quotes](#)
- List of any author awards and [book awards](#)
- Human interest information
- Potential interview Q&A
- Author contact information including both email and phone number(s)

A book-specific press kit should contain the following:

- [Book blurb](#)
- [Book cover](#)
- [Praise quotes](#)
- List of any author awards and [book awards](#)
- [Book excerpt](#)
- [Author biography](#)
- [Author photographs](#)
- Human interest information.
- Potential interview Q&A
- Author contact information including both email and phone number(s)

Guidelines

- **Include high and low res graphics.** Include both high resolution and low resolution versions of both the author photographs and book covers.
- **Take reporter's point of view.** Include book blurbs that are medium to longer length and written from the point of view of a reporter (i.e., descriptive and objective) than an author (i.e., as a marketing tool).
- **Provide human interest info.** Include interesting information about you as an author (such as any unusual hobbies or unique experiences) or the book (such as where you got the idea for the book or how long it took to write).
- **Anticipate interviews.** Consider answering questions that a reporter might ask during an interview. Consider reusing Q&As from exiting [author interviews](#) you have given, but select those questions that would be most relevant to the audience (e.g., human interest writer or book critic).
- **Add to website.** Include a press webpage on your author website where members of the media can read and download items in your press kit.
- **Start locally.** Start by sending your press kit with an appropriate cover letter to the reporters who do book reviews and articles about local authors in your local community and city newspapers.
- **Keep it current.** Keep your press kits up-to-date as you write new books, gather new praise quotes, and your contact information changes. Check the correctness of your press kits before you use them (e.g., to generate press releases).

Examples

- [Press page of my author website](#)

DRAFT

PRESS RELEASES

What Are They?

A *press release* (also known as a *news release* and *media release*) is a collection of digital information announcing a newsworthy event involving you, the author, or one of your books in a form that is useful for members of the press. Press releases come in the following forms:

- An *author award press release* is a press release announcing an award that you have won as an author.
- A [book award](#) *press release* is a press release announcing an award that one of your books has won.
- A *book-launch press release* is a press release announcing the publication of a new book.
- A *local event press release* is a press release announcing a local event such as a book signing at a local library or a small local author or book [conference](#).

A press release can announce an upcoming event or one that has already occurred. The receiver will likely edit the information in a press release for space limitations and to meet the needs of the media channel on which the information will be published.










What Are They Used For?

The primary marketing purpose of a press release is to encourage members of the press (such as local reporters and literary critics) to publish information about you,

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

your book, or a book-related event you are taking part in by providing them with all the information they need to know in a simple, easy to use form. Use press releases to get publicity, drive traffic to your author website, and increase sales. Getting publicity in the right media channels can cause you press release to go viral and make book sales achieve critical mass (i.e., enter a positive feedback loop).

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

The benefit of producing and distributing a press release can vary from none (if no one uses it) to high (if it gets multiple influential members of the press to publish articles in media channels the larger readership of which includes a high percentage of potential readers and other influencers).

The cost per press release is primarily in the effort or fee needed to widely distribute the press release.

What Should It Contain?

Press releases should consist of the following parts:

- *Dateline.* The city, date, and time of the release

Press Kits

- *Contact.* Your name, email address, author website, relevant social media author webpages, and phone number so that you can be contacted if there are any questions
- *Title.* A short sentence summarizing the press release
- *Pitch.* An introductory paragraph that answers the five W and H questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how.
- *Body.* The necessary content and background information that supports the pitch.
- *Anticipated questions.* Try to anticipate questions the journalist might ask and provide interesting answers.
- *Human interest info.* A few interesting facts about the author or award that provide a human interest component to the press release.

An *author award press release* body should also contain the following information:

- *Award.* The name of the award, a brief description of the award, the reason the award was given, the organization bestowing the award, and the date of the award
- *Author.* The name of the author, the [author's biography](#), and both low and high-resolution [author photographs](#).

A *book award press release* body should also contain the following information:

- *Award.* The name of the award, a brief description of the award, the organization bestowing the award, and the date of the award
- *Book.* The title of the book that won the award, the book's blurb written in the form of a succinct but

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

detailed summary of the book (written more like a news reporter, and less like a salesperson), and both low and high resolution photographs of the book's cover

A *book launch press release* body should also contain the following information:

- *Book.* The title of the book being launched, the book's blurb, and both low and high resolution photographs of the book's cover
- *Launch.* The book launch date and description of the associated book launch party
- *Anticipated questions.* Try to anticipate questions the journalist might ask and provide interesting answers.
- *Human interest info.* A few interesting facts about the author or award that provide a human interest component to the press release.

A *book-related event press release* body should also contain the following information:

- *Event.* The name of the event, a brief description of the event, the date(s) and time(s) of the event, the location(s) of the event (whether physical or online), and the organizer(s) or sponsor(s) of the event
- *Anticipated questions.* Try to anticipate questions the journalist might ask and provide interesting answers.
- *Human interest info.* A few interesting facts about the author or award that provide a human interest component to the press release.

Guidelines

- **Clearly label it.** Clearly label your press release as a press release. Include a dateline and title.

Press Kits

- **Keep it newsworthy.** Only use press releases to announce something that is truly newsworthy. Don't issue marketing spam thinly disguised as a news announcement.
- **Make it stand out.** Your press releases will need to compete against a potentially huge number of other press releases that its readers might receive. Only issue a press release if it will have a reasonable chance of standing out.
- **Start with the 5 W's and H.** A journalist is taught to write articles that answer the five questions: who, what, where, when, why, and how. Make the who and what obvious. Use your pitch to answer these questions. There are actually two why questions: why the announcement is being made and why anyone should care. Therefore, be sure to ensure that the why is compelling to both the journalist and his or her audience. Remember that if you don't grab the journalist's attention in this paragraph, then the rest of your press release is likely never to be read.
- **Be professional.** Make the press release look professional with the correct structure. Copyedit the content. Proofread it for grammar, typos, and inaccuracies. Verify the names, dates, and locations of events for correctness. Verify that the content reused from the [press kit](#) is current.
- **Keep it short.** Keep the press release succinct and to the point. Most press releases should not be more than a single page long and never over two pages. Given the large number of press releases most reporters receive, shorter press releases are more likely to be read than long ones.

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- **Keep it timely.** Send out press releases about future events no more than three to five days in advance (except for media channels with long publishing intervals). Send out press releases about current and past events within a day or two of their occurring.
- **Be responsive.** Journalists have hard deadlines, so respond to any contacts from the media in an extremely timely manner. If you don't get back to the journalist straightaway, they may well go on to a different press release.
- **Keep it easy.** Keep the press release easy to read with simple sentence structure, short paragraphs, and use slightly more white space (margins and between paragraphs). Avoid abbreviations, acronyms, and technical jargon. Proofread the press release for readability.
- **Follow a process.** Developing a press release is a four phase process: create it, optimize it for success, distribute it, and evaluate success. Consider using a standard template.
- **Choose your primary targets.** Determine who the most important recipients are and send your press release directly to them. Identify these people by name and title. If you can't find this information easily, call the organization and ask.
- **Distribute widely.** In addition to your primary targets, also distribute the completed press release locally, nationally, and globally including the Internet (discoverable via search engine), news organizations, journalists, and bloggers.

Press Kits

- **Use your [press kit](#).** Reuse the relevant information in your press kit for the generic content for your press release.
- **Minimize competition.** If practical, distribute your press release on slow news days. Pick a time of day that gives the journalist time to write the article. Do not send out your press release on the hour.
- **Use your marketing channels.** Publicize your press releases on your [author website](#), your [book blog](#), your [newsletter](#), and via [direct email](#) via your email list. Tell the people, especially the influencers, in your author [network](#).
- **Consider outsourcing distribution.** For major events such as [awards](#) and new book releases, consider using an service (such as [prweb](#)) that specializes in broad distribution.
- **Use [SEO](#).** Optimize your press releases so that they are more likely to be found by search engines.
- **Include low and high res photos.** Include low resolution photographs of the author and book cover for online publications and high-resolution photos for print publications.
- **Find a tie-in.** If you can, tie your pitch to an a timely topic. Note that this is not always possible as the press release is tied to the date of the event it announces.

Press Release Template

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (DATE)

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

Contact: Your Name

Organization: Your small publishing company (if any)

Phone Number: TBD

Email: TBD

HEADLINE (single line summary)

City, State: The first paragraph announces the event and summarizes the even in terms of the answers to the questions: who, what, where, when, why, and how.

The second paragraph provides detail backing up the first paragraph.

The optional third paragraph addresses anticipated questions and provides human interest information.

About Your Company: A short description of you, your personal publishing company (if any) and a link to the homepage of your author website

Press Kits

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PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

What Are They?





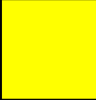



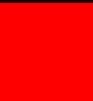
A *promotional item* is an author-related or book-related item that you give away to potential buyers of your books.

Examples of promotional items include bookmarks, postcards, posters, pens, and playing cards.

What Are They Used For?

The primary purpose of promotional items is to increase name recognition for the author and books.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

As shown in the preceding cost/benefit table, your TBD.

What Should It Contain?

Your TBD should contain the following information:

- TBD

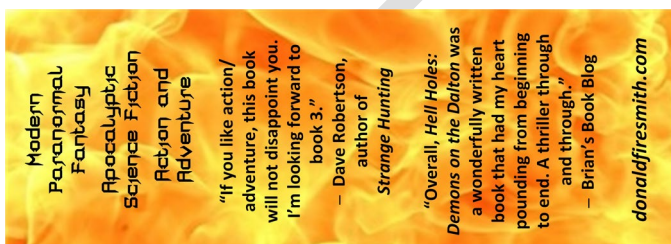
Guidelines

- Bookmarks are the best promotional items to give away in large numbers because they are very inexpensive, available from many sources, will actually be useful to the average reader, will last a reasonably long time if made from good paper stock, and are quite popular with readers.
- Insert a bookmark into each book you personally sell.
- Reserve more expensive promotional items (such as cups and decks of playing cards) for major giveaways and contests.

Examples

The following are the front and back of the book marks that I use to promote my Hell Holes books:





RECORD KEEPING










What Is It?

Record keeping consists of the tasks you perform to make and maintain records concerning your book marketing activities.

What Is It Used For?

Your record keeping will help you to keep track of your book marketing tasks (e.g., their status, costs, and effectiveness in terms of generating book sales). It will help you determine which of your tasks are cost-effective and should be continued and which of your tasks are not and should be discontinued. Your record keeping will include having a book marketing “TBD List” that will help you know what still needs to be done. Proper record keeping will also help you at tax time because your book marketing expenses are legitimate tax deductions.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High	Medium	Low
			
			
Cost	Low	Medium	High
			

As shown in the preceding cost/benefit table, your TBD.

What Should It Contain?

Your book marketing records should include:

- To-do list. Your list of book marketing tasks to perform
- Income and expense ledger. An itemized record of all book-related income and expenses for financial management and tax purposes
- [Author interviews](#). A record of all of your author interviews (including interviewer, venue/publication, hyperlink to the interview, and any associated cost(s))
- [Author spotlights](#).
- [Author webpages](#).
- [Author website](#). A record of your author website including major additions and associated dates
- Best seller lists.
- [Blog tours](#). A record of all blog tours including organizer, cost, dates, venues with stop types, and apparent impact on book sales/downloads
- [Book awards](#). A record of all of the awards your books have won including associated events, dates, and hyperlinks
- Book blasts.
- [Book reviews](#). A record of all of your major book review requests and actual reviews (e.g., by professional reviewers, book bloggers, and other authors) including the associated venues, reviewers, dates, hyperlinks to the reviews, and costs (if any)
- [Book sales](#). A record of all book sales including sale price, dates, venues such as book stores and blog postings, and impact on sales/downloads

Record Keeping

- [Book signings](#). A record of all book signings dates, venues such as libraries and conferences, number of books signed, and impact on sales/downloads)
- [Book spotlights](#) A record of all book spotlights including dates posted, venues, clicks, and impact on sales/downloads
- [Book trailers](#) A record of all book trailers including publication dates, venues such as YouTube, and number of views
- [Character interviews](#) A record of all character interviews including dates posted, venues such as book blogs, and number of views
- Number of sales/downloads. The total number of sales or download per month for each book
- *Amazon rank*. The overall and genre-specific Amazon sales rank

Guidelines

- Regularly maintain your records by recording information as soon as you have it and it is fresh in your mind. Your records are much harder and less likely to be complete and accurate if you wait.

Examples

- The following graph automatically generated by [InstaFreebie](#) shows the number of free copies of *Hell Holes: What Lurks Below* that have been downloaded per day. You can get a display of the specific number and day can be popped-up by hovering your cursor over a specific date. The individual spikes in downloads are associated with various one-day promotions, whereas the groups of

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

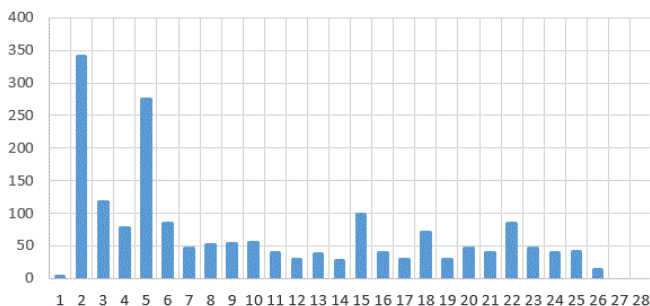
spikes are associated with ongoing promotions such as blog tours. This graph is one more piece of evidence that marketing needs to be ongoing if you want to achieve ongoing sales.

Claims



- The following figure shows the number of copies of one book sold/downloaded per day over the course of a month. It shows the benefit of a major blog tour at the beginning of the month and how it naturally decreases over time. The smaller bump on the 15th was probably due to a book spotlight on a popular newsletter.

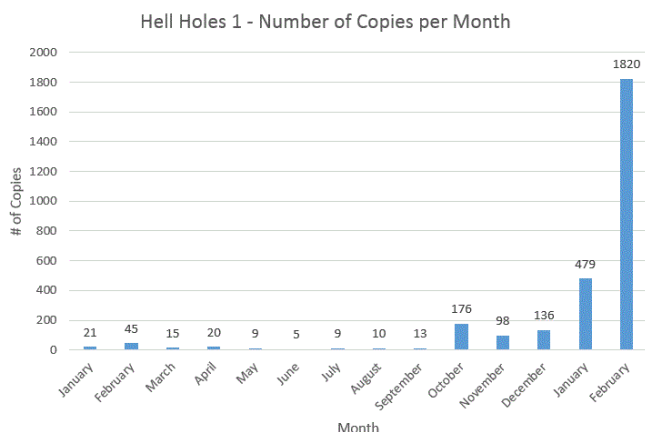
February Daily Number of Copies of
Hell Holes: What Lurks Below



- The following figure shows the number of copies of one book sold/downloaded per month. There was

Record Keeping

very little marketing prior to October. Major marketing campaigns were held in January and February. Note that once the book reached #3 on the Amazon Kindle post-apocalyptic science fiction best seller list at the beginning of February, the book entered a positive feedback loop many people select their next book from these best seller lists.



RSS FEEDS

What Are They?




An *RSS* (a.k.a., *Really Simple Syndication* and *Rich Site Summary*) *feed* is a news feed that supplies formatted summaries of frequently updated content (e.g., blog entries, news updates, to a website, such as your [author website](#) or a book blogger's website).

What Is It Used For?

Your author website's RSS feed enables you to automatically distribute author- and book-related news to subscribers (e.g., potential readers, book bloggers, acquisition librarians, and book store buyers) in a form that they can read using their RSS readers, browsers, email programs, or other devices.

Your RSS feed helps you to build and support a loyal following, who can then share your content via their social media.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

RSS Feeds

The benefit of having an RSS feed for your author website is either medium or low depending on how many of your potential readers are aware that it exists and subscribe to it using their RSS readers. This depends on the popularity of your author website and the technical sophistication of your readers. Note that many readers would prefer an email newsletter because they are more familiar with email than RSS and are more likely to have an email program than an RSS reader.

Very little effort is required if your website was built using a tool (such as WordPress) that automatically generates an RSS feed for you. If not, you will likely have to obtain/buy and install an RSS feed generation app.

What Should It Contain?

Your RSS feed will be a regularly updated XML file that contains the following information:

- *Metadata* such as RSS title and description, website URL, and creation date and time
- *Content* including entry title, entry description (text, graphics, video, and audio files), and publication date and time

Guidelines

- Add an RSS link to your [book blog](#) on your [author webpages](#), and identify this link with the standard RSS icon.
- Use meaningful titles for the Channel feed and RSS feed Items so that RSS directories and search engines can use the words in these titles to classify the RSS feeds.

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- Regularly update your RSS feed with new content so that the feed becomes valuable to your feed's readers.
- Avoid lots of large diagrams in your blogs as these will cause your RSS feed to load slowly in the readers' RSS feed readers.
- Place a small favicon for your author's webpages in the root directory of your website so that the RSS readers can use it to identify your feed and thereby reinforce your [branding](#).
- Include RSS feed "auto-discovery" code in your webpages' HTML page headers so that certain browsers and RSS feed readers are able to automatically know that your RSS feed is available and contains specific types of content.
- Use absolute rather than relative URL addresses to identify links in your RSS feed content (e.g., your blog posts). Relative URLs are likely to break in the RSS readers.
- Most major website building tools (such as [Wix](#) and [WordPress](#)) automatically generate and update RSS feed data that RSS feed readers can periodically download and display to your readers.

Additional Resources

- I have built and maintain my author website using WordPress, which automatically generates my RSS feed.

My RSS feed's channel title is "Donald Firesmith".

My RSS link is "http://donaldfiresmith.com/feed/".

My RSS description is "Official Author Website".

RSS Feeds

- My RSS feed reader is from <https://Feedly.com>.

DRAFT

SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS









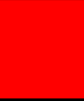
What Is It?

A *school presentation* is an author presentation to students given at a grade school, middle school, or high school.

What Is It Used For?

School presentations are a good way to introduce school students, teachers, and librarians to your books. It can be used to sell copies of your book and to increase your fan base.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

As shown in the preceding cost/benefit table, your TBD.

What Should It Contain?

A school presentation typically includes the following activities:

Search Engine Optimization

- A brief author introduction by the teacher or librarian.
- A brief presentation about the author's relevant books
- A brief reading from one or more of your books
- A question and answer period
- A book signing

Guidelines

- **Identify and research relevant schools.** Go to your school district's website to identify the relevant schools within the distance you are willing to drive. Go to each individual school's staff webpages to identify the relevant teachers and librarian including their email addresses and phone numbers. Copy and paste this information into a table in an MS Word document. That way, you will be able to copy the email addresses and create a single query letter email you can send to all of them.
- **Develop and send query emails.** Develop a standard query email to send to the school teachers and librarians. In the query letter, introduce yourself, list your books, and offer to make a presentation to the students. See example below.
- **Learn the school's expectations.** TBD.
- **Send purchase forms early.** TBD.
- **Bring books and handouts.** TBD.
- **Be able to make change.** TBD.
- **Plan your presentation**
- **Consider your audience.** Your primary audience is the students.
- **Engage your audience.** TBD.

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

- **Autograph your books.** TBD.
- **Be flexible.** TBD.

Examples

The following is an example of a book purchase form:

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SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION










What Is It?

Search engine optimization (SEO) is a set of techniques that increases the likelihood that Internet searches using popular search engines (e.g., Google) will find webpages associated with your book marketing.

What Is It Used For?

Your TBD is primarily used to increase the likelihood that people will be directed to webpages associated with your book marketing when performing related Internet searches.

Cost/Benefit Table

Benefit	High			
	Medium			
	Low			
		Low	Medium	High
		Cost		

As shown in the preceding cost/benefit table, your TBD.

What Should It Contain?

Your TBD should contain the following information:

- TBD

Guidelines

- **Hash tags.** Share the interview link on social media and use hashtags with the same key words, ask your friends & followers to share or repost. This forces Social media engines to push your interview as TRENDING on the same hashtags the more it is shared.
- **Hyperlinks.** When selecting the text for hyperlinks, choose words that are likely to be used as search engine keywords. Use multiple relevant words to narrow the search results so that your webpage will appear closer to the top of the list of results.

For example, suppose that you are a fantasy author and are creating a link to one of your [author interviews](#). Consider labeling that link “author interview” or better yet “fantasy author interview” rather than just “interview” so that searches for interviews given by fantasy authors are more likely to result in a link to your interview. For example, [fantasy author interview](#) is a better hyperlink than [interview](#) as far as search engine optimization goes.

Examples

Suppose that you are a fantasy author and are creating a link to one of your an [author interviews](#). Consider labeling that link “author interview” or better yet “fantasy author interview” rather than just “interview” so that searches for interviews given by fantasy authors are more likely to result in a link to your interview. For example, [fantasy author interview](#).

Search Engine Optimization

- Example

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PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Clearly, there are far too many marketing tools for anyone to be able to use all at once. This is especially true for indie authors who have strict limits on the time and money they can invest in marketing their books. To use two relevant metaphors, “you can’t boil the ocean” and “the way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time.”

So, where do you start? You begin by realizing that some of the tools and techniques covered in this book depend on other ones. For example, it will typically require multiple positive book reviews before you can expect to find any useful praise quotes.

The top factors potential readers use when determining whether to buy a book are price, genre, cover art, book blurb, and author.

GLOSSARY

advanced review copy (ARC)

a copy of a new book given to an author, book blogger, book critic, or beta reviewer prior release for the purpose of providing a [book review](#)

advertising

the activity of producing advertisements for commercial products such as books

advertisement

an audio or visual form of marketing communication that employs an clearly sponsored, non-personal message to promote or sell products such as books

agent

a person or business authorized to legally represent and act on behalf of another (such as an author), for example when negotiating a book contract with a traditional publisher or with a film studio for movie rights to a book

audio interview

an [author interview](#) or [character interview](#) in the form of an audio recording

author

a person who has written one or more books

author-as-seller book signing

a [book signing](#) at which the author sells his or her own books

author award

an award given to an author in recognition of the author's books

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

author award press release

a [press release](#) announcing an award won by an author for his or her books

[author biography](#)

a short (2-3 paragraphs) description of an author

author book blog

a [book blog](#) that is produced by an author and usually a part of the [author's website](#)

author book poster

a [book advertising poster](#) that advertises both the author and one or more of the author's books and shows both the author and the book covers(s)

[author business card](#)

your professional business card as an author

author conference

a [conference](#) that is primarily aimed at helping authors become more successful

[author email signature](#)

a signature block for use at the end of emails that you send in your capacity as an author

[author interview](#)

a conversation in which the author answers a series of questions posed by the host of the interview

[author photograph](#)

a photograph of you as an author that is suitable for use in your marketing

author profile

synonym for [author spotlight](#)

Glossary

author spotlight

a short article or blog post focusing on a single author and his or her books

author webpage

a webpage devoted to a single author

author website

a website devoted to a single author and that author's books and that is typically hosted by the author

basic giveaway

a [book giveaway](#) in which a single author advertises and holds a giveaway of one or more of his or her own books

best seller list

an ordered list of the currently most popular books, typically within a single category, as determined by some authority such as the New York Times (NYT) and Amazon

beta reader

a person who receives an early draft manuscript for the purpose of providing comments to the author so that the book can be improved prior to publication

blog

a regularly updated web page that is typically run by an individual or small group and is often written in an informal or conversational style

blogger

a person who runs a blog

blogger book blog

a [book blog](#) that is run by a blogger other than the author

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

blog giveaway

a [book giveaway](#) in which a book blogger advertises and runs a giveaway of one or more of an author's books

[blog tour](#)

an online author-specific book tour consisting of stops at several online [book blogs](#)

[book advertising poster](#)

a table-top poster (i.e., a poster printed on poster board with a fold-out stand) that is intended to be placed on a table where an author autographs books or where the books are sold

[book award](#)

a literary prize that is awarded, typically annually, by an organization for the best book in a certain category

book award press release

a [press release](#) announcing an award won by a book

[book blast](#)

a one-day [blog tour](#) with multiple stops restricted to a single book

book blitz

synonym for [book blast](#)

[book blog](#)

an online blog that typically focuses on one or more related genres of books such as paranormal, fantasy, and science fiction or romance and paranormal romance

book blogger

a blogger who runs a [book blog](#)

Glossary

[book blurb](#)

a very short marketing description of a book

[book bundling](#)

the packaging of multiple books so that they can be purchased as a set for a single lower price

[book buy link](#)

a hyperlink to a webpage where a potential reader can buy a copy of the associated book

[book Cataloging in Publication \(CIP\) data block](#)

a record of bibliographic data that is prepared by the Library of Congress for a book that has not yet been published

[book club](#)

a club of book readers (and authors) who get together to discuss books and aspects of writing books

book club author webpage

an author webpage hosted by a book club such as [Goodreads](#) and the [Online Book Club](#)

book conference

a [conference](#) at which publishers and agents showcase books and their authors to representatives from book stores, libraries, and the media (e.g., book critics)

book contest

a [book giveaway](#) during which one or more authors give one or more of their books as prizes

[book cover](#)

a protective cover that is bound together with the pages of the book and consists of the front cover, spine, and back cover. For ebooks, a book cover is the image of the front cover of the physical book that is used as the

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

book's first page

book cover reveal

a short-duration promotion tied to the initial revealing of a book's cover prior to the book's official release date

book critic

a person who professionally reviews books, typically for a newspaper, journal, or magazine

book distributor

a company that prints and distributes physical books and also distributes ebooks on behalf of the publisher, who is the author in the case of indie authors instead of a traditional publishing company.

Book distributors commonly used by indie authors include CreateSpace, IngramSpark, Kindle Direct Publishing, and Smashwords.

book event flyer

a flyer that advertises a book-related event such as a lecture, book reading, and book signing

book excerpt

a sample of your book intended to give a potential reader a feel for what the book will be like

book fair

an informal book-related conference primarily oriented towards the reader community where members of the public go to see, hear, and meet authors

book festival

synonym for book fair

book giveaway

an event (e.g., a sweepstakes, contest, or other type of

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promotion) in which free copies of books, either autographed physical books or free downloads of ebooks, are given out.

The books given away can be permanently free or can have their price temporarily reduced to zero for the purpose of the giveaway

[book information sheet](#)

a one or two page marketing summary of your book

book launch

the marketing events that occur on the day that the book official becomes available for sale to readers

book launch blast

a [book blast](#) that occurs on book launch day

book launch day

the day that the book official becomes available for sale to readers

[book launch party](#)

a party that is thrown by an author (or book publicist) to celebrate the publication of the book

book launch party team

a [book launch team](#) that helps you plan, prepare for, and run your [book launch party](#)

book launch press release

a [press release](#) announcing the publication of a new book

[book launch team](#)

a team consisting of all of the people who volunteer to help you launch your book

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

[book pricing](#)

the activity of setting the prices of books in order to achieve some goal such as maximizing sales, maximizing income, increasing name recognition, obtaining more [book reviews](#), and developing a fan base

book promo picture

synonym for [book promotions picture](#)

[book promotions \(promo\) picture](#)

a picture that is used to advertise a book

book release day

synonym for [book launch day](#)

[book reading](#)

a public event during which an author reads aloud [excerpts](#) of his or her book(s)

[book review](#)

a short critical description of a book based on an analysis or evaluation of its content, style, and merit

[book sale](#)

an advertised period during which the [book's price](#) is temporarily lowered to increase its sales

book series

a sequence of books that are formally identified together as a group because they are written by the same author or are marketed as a group by their publisher

book series poster

a [book advertising poster](#) that multiple books in a series and typically shows the front cover of each of the books

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[book signing](#)

a physical in-person event (for example, at a local bookstore, library, or [conference](#)) at which an author can sell and autograph books

[book spotlight](#)

a short book-specific online advertisement of a specific book, typically hosted by a [book blog](#)

book store author webpage

an [author webpage](#) hosted by a book store such as Amazon's author pages

book sweepstakes

synonym for [book contest](#)

book synopsis

synonym for [book blog](#)

book tour

synonym for [blog tour](#)

book trade show

a [conference](#) that is often run by a trade association and is primarily intended for independent booksellers, book wholesalers, publishers and other industry professionals

[book trailer](#)

a short (e.g., between 30 seconds and two minutes) movie advertising a book

book trailer reveal

a [book blast](#) that occurs on the day that a [book's trailer](#) is first revealed to potential readers

[branding](#)

the marketing practice of creating a distinctive name, symbol (logo), or design (e.g., colors and fonts) that

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

identifies and differentiates you and your books from those written by other authors

chapter excerpt

a [book excerpt](#) consisting of a single chapter, typically the first chapter

[character interview](#)

an interview in which an author answers questions as if he or she were a character in one or more of his or her books

[conference](#)

a formal meeting where people meet over the course of one or more days to discuss and learn about a specific subject such as how to write and publish books or a specific genre of books, movies, and television shows

cover

synonym for [book cover](#)

cover reveal

synonym for [book cover reveal](#)

cross advertisement

a [group promotion](#) in which each author hosts advertisements (such as [author interviews](#), [author spotlights](#), and [book spotlights](#)) intended to increase the sales of the other authors' books, but not their own books

cross book contest

a group [book contest](#) in which each author hosts his own book contest of the other authors' books, but not their own

cross giveaway

a [group promotion](#) in which each author hosts his own

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[book giveaway](#) of the other author's books, but not his own

cross sale

a [group promotion](#) in which each author hosts his own [sale](#) of the other authors' books, but not his own

[direct email](#)

an email sent directly from the author to potential or actual readers of the books

distributor

a synonym for [book distributor](#)

distributor author webpage

an [author webpage](#) that is hosted by a [book distributor](#)

ebook

a book in digital form, consisting of text, images, or both, that is readable on a digital device such as an ebook reader, desktop computer monitor, laptop, tablet, or smart phone

ebook reader

a device intended primarily for reading ebooks such as a Kindle or Nook

email list

a list of email addresses, typically of potential readers who have signed up to receive [email newsletters](#) or [direct emails](#) from an author about book-related events such as contests and [giveaways](#)

[email newsletter](#)

a newsletter in the form of an email that is typically regularly sent to subscribers (e.g., fans, potential readers of your books, and other authors)

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

e-newsletter

synonym for [email newsletter](#)

full-size photograph

a large, high-resolution photo that is suitable for press releases and posters

genre conference

a [conference](#) based on a theme or genre such as a science fiction convention, comic convention, black authors convention, local authors convention, and children's books convention

graphical buy link

a [book buy link](#) consisting of a graphic (e.g., [book cover](#), [book promo picture](#), and logo)

group book contest

a [book contest](#) that is hosted by a group of collaborating authors

group giveaway

a [book giveaway](#) in which a book blogger, book store, or [book distributor](#) collects a cohesive collection of books from multiple authors for a combined giveaway

group promotion

a [promotion](#) that is hosted by multiple collaborating authors

[guest blog post](#)

a blog post written by an author but hosted on someone else's [book blog](#) rather than your own [author website's](#) book blog

hybrid author

an author who both independently publishes his own books (i.e., an indie author) and also uses a traditional

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publisher

hybrid launch party

a [book launch party](#) that simultaneously take place online and at a physical venue

indie author

an author who is also the [publisher](#) of his or her own book(s)

individual book contest

a [book contest](#) that is hosted by a single author

joint contest

a [group promotion](#) in which all authors in the group host the same [contest](#) having copies of one or more books from each author as the prize(s)

joint advertisement

a [group promotion](#) in which all authors in the group host the same advertisements (such as author interviews, author spotlights, and book spotlights) intended to increase the *sales* of the books of all of the authors

joint book contest

a group [book contest](#) in which all authors in the group host the same book contest having copies of one or more books from each author as the prize(s)

joint book giveaway

a [group promotion](#) in which all authors in the group host the same [giveaway](#) of books of all of the authors

joint book sale

a [group promotion](#) in which all authors in the group host the same [sale](#) of books from all of the authors

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

launch party

synonym for [book launch party](#)

literary festival

synonym for [book fair](#)

local event press release

a [press release](#) announcing a local event such as a book signing at a local library or a small local book [conference](#)

marketing

the activity of promoting an author and his or her books including topics such as customer analysis, pricing, advertising, selling, and delivery

[marketing campaign](#)

a specific well-defined series of coordinated activities used to market one or more books during a specific time interval

The books can be new books, new editions of existing books (possibly with new covers), or existing books, the sales of which have slumped. Marketing campaigns may last one or more days, weeks, or even months. Marketing campaigns can be run by the author, the author's publisher (if any), the author's publicist (if any), or a book promotions company.

[marketing metric](#)

a metric that is measured to determine the cost, effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness of your marketing tasks

[marketing plan](#)

TBD

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[marketing to-do-list](#)

a to-do-list of the marketing-related tasks that need to be performed

mid-size photograph

a medium size, high-resolution photo that is suitable for use on a [book's back cover](#)

multi-author giveaway

synonym for [group giveaway](#)

[networking](#)

the activities that you perform to build networks of influential people who will support your writing career

official author website

the official [website](#) that is hosted by the author and is devoted to that author and his or her books

online book launch team

a [book launch team](#) that helps make the online aspects of your book launch a success

online book tour

synonym for [blog tour](#)

online convention

a virtual [conference](#) that takes place totally on-line rather than at a physical location

online launch party

a [book launch party](#) that takes place online, primarily hosted on your [author website](#) (and not your personal website)

They may also be cohosted on your social media author webpages (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) as well as the websites of book bloggers.

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

percentage excerpt

a [book excerpt](#) consisting of a percentage of the total book such as the first 5%, 10%, or 20%

physical launch party

a [book launch party](#) that occurs at a physical venue such as a local book store, public library, or book club meeting

[*praise quote*](#)

a quotation that praises either a book or an author

praise quote poster

a [book advertising poster](#) that lists a series of praise quotes

[*press kit*](#)

a collection of digital information about you, the author, and your books in a form that is useful for members of the press

[*press release*](#)

a collection of digital information about a newsworthy event involving you, the author, or one of your books in a form that is useful for members of the press

promo post

synonym for [book spotlight](#)

promotion

an activity intended to increase interest in or the sales of one or more books

promotional item

an author-related or book-related item that is given away to potential buyers of one's books such as bookmarks, posters, pens, playing cards

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publisher

a person or company that prepares and issues books for sale or download

record keeping

the tasks performed to make and maintain records concerning book marketing activities

release day blast

synonym for [book launch blast](#)

release party

Synonym for [book launch party](#)

review giveaway

a [book giveaway](#) in which the author gives free copies of his or her book in exchange for a review of that book

RSS feed

The *really simple syndication* (or *rich site summary*) feed is a news feed that supplies formatted summaries of frequently updated content (e.g., blog entries, news updates, to a website, such as your [author website](#) or a book blogger's website)

search engine optimization (SEO)

a set of techniques that increases the likelihood that Internet searches using popular search engines (e.g., Google) will find webpages associated with your book marketing

single book poster

a [book advertising poster](#) that advertises a single book and typically is merely a blown-up photo of the [book's front cover](#)

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

social media author webpage

an [author webpage](#) that is hosted on social media sites such as [Facebook](#) and Twitter

store-as-seller book signing

a [book signing](#) at which the host of the book signing sells the author's books

textual buy link

a text-based [book buy link](#)

textual interview

an [author interview](#) or [character interview](#) in the form of a written recording

thumbnail

a small, low-resolution photograph of you as an author or of the front cover of one of your books that is suitable for use online as a buy link or for display on your website, social media, blog postings, author interviews, etc.

video interview

an [author interview](#) or [character interview](#) in the form of a video recording

virtual book tour

synonym for [blog tour](#)

virtual launch party

synonym for [online launch party](#)

Writer's festival

Synonym for [author conference](#)

OTHER BOOKS BY DONALD FIRESMITH

FICTION

Magical Wands: A Cornucopia of Wand Lore

Hell Holes 1: What Lurks Below

Hell Holes 2: Demons on the Dalton

NONFICTION

*Common Testing Pitfalls and Ways to Prevent and
Mitigate Them*

*The Method Framework for Engineering System
Architectures*

The OPEN Process Framework

*The OPEN Modeling Language (OML) Reference
Manual*

*Documenting a Complete Java Application using
OPEN*

Dictionary of Object Technology

Object Oriented Analysis and Logical Design

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Becky and Dane.

DRAFT

Dedication

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the brave members of the US Army Special Forces, who would march into hell if that is what it took to defend the world.

DRAFT

A THANK YOU TO MY READERS

Thank you for purchasing and reading *Hell Holes: To Hell and Back*, the third and final book in my Hell Hole trilogy. I hope you enjoyed it and are looking forward to reading other books of mine.

The success of all books, but especially books by new Indie authors, greatly depends on their readers. Potential new readers are unlikely to become aware of, let alone purchase, books without book reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations. If you liked this book, then please help others enjoy it too by recommending it to your friends, both directly and via social media, and taking a few minutes to write a review at your favorite e-book store and [Goodreads](#).

If you post a review of the book, please email me at donfiresmith@gmail.com with a link to the review, and to show my appreciation I will send you a coupon for a free ebook copy of the next book I write once it is completed.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



A computer geek by day, Donald Firesmith works as a system and software engineer helping the US Government acquire large, complex software-intensive systems. In this guise, he has authored seven technical books, written numerous software- and system-related articles and papers, and spoken at more conferences than he can possibly remember.

By night and on weekends, his alter ego writes paranormal fantasy novels and relaxes by handcrafting magic wands from various magical woods and mystical gemstones. He lives in Crafton, Pennsylvania with his wife Becky, his son Dane, and varying numbers of dogs, cats, and birds.

You can learn more about the author by visiting his personal website:

Book Marketing for Indie Authors

<http://sites.google.com/a/firesmith.net/donald-firesmith/>

His magical wands and autographed copies of his wand lore book are available from the Firesmith's Wand Shoppe at: <http://magicalwandshoppe.com>.

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