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Designing the Virtual Press Kit

By Howard Hopkins

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When I first began trying to publicize my novels online, I encountered a number of obstacles. First, I write print westerns under a pseudonym, Lance Howard, and ebooks under my own name. This, I quickly discovered, created a bit of confusion. I needed a way to separate Lance Howard from Howard Hopkins, while at the same time letting folks know they were the same author.

I also "paint" ebook covers, design promotional cards, postcards and bookmarks for other writers and needed a way to get this information across without cramming up my signature lines or diluting their impact.

The press kit seemed like a partial answer; that way I could delegate sections for my books, my ebooks and my artwork. Why partial? Well, designing a press kit takes a lot of time and consideration and an author wants to make it look as professional as possible. Yet at the same time the costs involved can be astronomical. Printing the individual elements on quality paper, color, sturdy folders, business cards for the inside pocket and postage to send them to various sources add up quick. And while press kits are effective where physical newspapers, magazines, or radio are involved, they don't solve the problem of online promotion very well. Since I wanted to focus on my ebooks and e-art, that was a quandary.

Enter the Virtual Press Kit. I am not sure why I didn't hit upon the idea sooner. I had been publishing an electronic magazine for half a year, all the while stowing the online promotion idea in

the back of my mind, or slipping individual pieces of it into my publication. While laying out my last issue, those elements suddenly gelled. Why not design a publication dedicated to promoting my work exclusively. From there it was a short step to the Virtual Press Kit.

What goes in your kit? Well, the same elements that go into your printed version: press releases, flyers, a business card, contact information, etc. I will try to take you on a brief tour through the one I created to get you started. From there you can tailor it to your own needs and individual tastes.

I created my Virtual Press Kit for Adobe's PDF, because I had the software for my electronic magazine and because Adobe Acrobat is cross-platformed for Windows and Mac operating systems. However, the Adobe software is a bit pricey so you can do yours in Word if you prefer. I set mine up using Word 97, so I will gear the article towards that program.

First I created my cover using Paint Shop Pro 7. Most authors aren't virtual artists, though, so I would suggest picking your ebook cover as an opening page. Word allows you to insert a jpeg and a great cover grabs a reader's attention immediately. For the next page, I used Word's WordArt feature. There are a number of fancy designs, but I would suggest selecting one of the more subdued, professional looking patterns. I titled this page Howard Hopkins' Virtual Press Kit. Not particularly original but it gets the point across. On the next page I placed my contact information, my email and webpage address. I would suggest not entering your mailing address, unless you have a post office box specifically for that purpose. Anyone in need of your mailing address can contact you through your email.

On the next page I placed my bio.

Beyond that, I set up a section listing all my hardcover and paperback credits, then my ebook credits. I keep a number of pages after that for my print and ebook covers. Next, I inserted press releases for my most recent novels.

Last I offered an information section and samples of my artwork for covers, cards and postcards. I included some of my favorite works and pricing guidelines.

That's all there is to it. If you are skilled with graphics,

then pretty it up in whatever way suits your style. If you have Acrobat, print it to PDF then research places that might be interested in seeing your work, perhaps local newspapers -- if you can find the local reporter's email listing in the paper, all the better. I got an interview this way.

For those who would like to see a virtual copy of my kit for ideas and set up feel free to download it at:
<http://howardhopkins.com/media.htm>

Howard Hopkins is the author of six horror and western ebooks from Atlantic Bridge Publishing (www.atlanticbridge.net) under his own name and more than twenty print westerns under the penname Lance Howard. His novels can be purchased at bn.com, www.amazon.co.uk and amazon.com and he lives in Maine.

Killer Press Kits – Press Kits That Demand Attention

By Annette Gisby

So, you've had your book published or you've gone the self-published route, but what do you do now?

You contact a newspaper, radio or television station requesting an interview and they ask you to send them a press kit.

First of all, don't panic. A press kit is not some magical entity that only those published by the big houses can have. You can create an affordable and great looking press kit on your own.

Here are some things that you can include in your press kit to send to interested reviewers and interviewers.

An author's bio detailing all your professional writing credits, contest wins, short stories, articles etc. A little bit about what you enjoy in your spare time, but most of it should be about your writing life.

Include the clippings (or photocopies of them) from newspapers or magazines where your articles have appeared. If you've only ever written for the web, print out a copy of the article and mention the website where it was selected to appear. Don't include your own website as a writing credit.

An author photograph, as professional as possible. A head and shoulders shot is usual. Don't send your latest holiday snaps.

A picture of your book's cover, or postcard or poster of it.

Any previous good reviews you have had for your book.

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Any speaking engagements or booksigning events that you have coming up. Or the details of previous ones and how successful they were.

You could also include a previous interview, it might save them some time and at least you know what sort of questions might be asked of you.

If you can afford it, a nice presentation folder for your press kit goes down well, but it isn't a necessity. On your website, you can also list the things above as a virtual press kit, but if a newspaper etc. ask for a press kit, don't just send them to the website. They would probably prefer everything in hard copy, but it doesn't hurt to ask if they would accept an electronic copy.

Annette Gisby is a novelist and freelance writer. Her articles have appeared both in print and online, and to date she has three fiction books published, *Silent Screams*, *Drowning Rapunzel* and *Shadows of the Rose*. Her non-fiction book, *Writing the Dream* has lots more hints and tips for writers. Please visit Annette's website for more information on her books:

Killer Press Kits – Press Kits That Demand Attention

Kit - Types And Uses

What Do I Need A Media Kit For?

Get your Garage Band out of the Garage in into a Gig: Part I: Press Kit and Demo

Press Releases vs. Advertising Or How To Get Free Publicity for Your Business

Affiliate Marketing PLR Kit

Self Improvement PLR Kit

Hobbies, Arts and Crafts PLR Kit

Press Release E-Manual

Disaster Preparedness and Crime Protection Manual



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