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Writing Fiction for The Internet

By Andy Walsh

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'We are all apprentices in a craft where no one ever becomes a master'.

Ernest Hemingway

Introduction

One of the best things about the internet is the freedom that it can give. Within reason, you can talk to anyone, anywhere about mostly anything. It is a great communication tool.

Recently, during the Seattle earthquake, I was able to get minute-by-minute feedback about what was going on from people that I've met online – real-time information even though I was sat in my office across the other side of the world in the UK.

One of the areas that is currently being revolutionised by the internet is the world of publishing. You can have your writing available to millions of people within a few hours. The frustration of rejection after rejection from traditional publishers can partly be assuaged.

You can do this too.

You can have your novel, your short story or your poem available for the entire technological world to read. You can meet and talk with writers from all over the world. You can critique other people's work and get feedback on your own.

In short, you can become part of the biggest writing circle this world has ever seen.

In this book, I'll be advising you how to get started – the things you need to get yourself up and running. I'll be including links to useful sites and resources. I'll show you how to build a website that will be a showcase for your work. I'll also give you advice about that most difficult of tasks: marketing your book.

I hope this book gives you the inspiration to get started.

'I love being a writer. What I can't stand is the paperwork'.

Peter De Vries

Getting Started

You've written your blockbuster. You've sent it off to a dozen agents and publishers. Then...then it happens – the rejection letters start to arrive.

I'm sorry, this really isn't for us.

This is only a personal opinion, of course, but...

You write well but we're not in the market for this kind of work at the moment.

All the best in your efforts to get published.

The first two or three rejections make you feel small and pathetic. The next two or three make you angry. If you're lucky, by the time the sixth and seventh rejection comes your way, you're used to it.

You have a great story but no one seems to want to get involved.

WAIT...

There is an alternative to traditional publishing and it uses a resource that is becoming increasingly popular – the internet.

You see, traditional publishers, bless them, are in a highly competitive market. They cannot afford to take some of the gambles that they might have done a few years back. They have to make sure that the books that they publish make money. Now they all make

mistakes (anyone remember Anthea Turner's Biography?) but in the main you can't blame them for being cautious.

Consider two circumstances:—

One

If I was a soap star, then I'd have more chance of being published. I'd have celebrity, for a start, my name would be known. Not that I'm suggesting that celebrities produce rubbish. It's just that if a publisher had two books of equal literary value (in their opinion), one by a major soap star and one by a complete unknown, I know which one they'll pick to publish.

Two

Suppose I have written a superb biography of, for example, Prince Rupert of Liechtenstein. It may be a truly well researched and well written volume. It may allow the reader deep insights into the

subject matter. It may be one of the best biographies ever written. However, it has no real market. Maybe only a handful of people in the world are interested in Prince Rupert. Now, supposing that on the same day a moderately well written biography arrives of a famous Premiership footballer. Which one will the publisher pick?

You see, the above two examples show two things in the modern world of publishing. You need to have an assured MARKET and you need to have a PROFILE.

Granted, new authors are published every week. But it is getting increasingly difficult to be published by the traditional route.

The internet is the great leveller. You can publish, within reason, what you like. Someone in Brisbane who shares your passion about Prince Rupert can type his name into a search engine and find your glorious book.

You are no longer dependent on someone else to become published.

You are free...

Andy Walsh is a househusband and writer living in Cumbria in the UK. He writes novels, short stories and poems some of which you can read at www.stbrodag.com. Buy 'Writing Fiction For the Internet' at www.stbrodag.com/buy.html Contact him at andwalsh@lineone.net

Keeping your readers interested when writing non-fiction

By Gary R. Hess

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Writing non-fiction might be the easiest of all writings, but it's not always the easiest to keep your readers interested.

When writing non-fiction the best thing to do is research, even when the story is about you, research. Readers are generally well educated, and chances are, they will know when something is not quite right. As well, if you are writing a paper for a class or to educate about a certain subject, research is a must.

On the other hand, be sure to not overdue it. Readers do not need to know why the sky is blue and why horses aren't used for glue anymore. Give them basic facts which relate to what you are trying to say.

Another necessity when writing non-fiction, or even fiction for that matter, is using plenty of details. Details, details, details!!! Readers love details.

Want to write about Susie's new hairstyle? Tell us what the color is, what the length is and how it lays. It allows the reader to visualize the characters and setting better. Since this is not a movie, this is what needs to be said.

As readers are the top priority when writing, the reader must know exactly what is going on. Do not leave the small things out. Do not let the reader wonder what happened between point A and point B, unless of course it's a murder mystery then things change but for the most part this holds true.

If you have done things story, essay, research project or whatever else you happen to be writing, will almost be ready. Just be sure to follow some guidelines along the way. Write it in some order, such as chronologically or "flash-back" style. Just don't lose track of your readers.

If all of these can be accomplished smoothly and researched properly your story is now complete. Jump up and down and pat yourself on the back because you have done it.

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