

Frustrated by social media? Want to promote your creative work, but not sure how to start? This workshop will describe the basic concepts of social media and will show you techniques for building and maintaining an effective platform. We'll discuss how to get organized, the crucial elements of success, and practical ways to build a customer base. We'll even talk about what NOT to do. You'll leave equipped to set up the basic foundations of your platform and will be given information, resources, and recommended reading to assist you during your new adventure. Bring your laptop or tablet to class. If you don't have one to bring, you can watch others and learn during the hands-on portion.

Basics of Building a Social Media Platform

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Introduction

Hello, I'm [Robin Kalinich](#) and I'll be leading this workshop today aimed at learning the basics of building a social media platform.

I'd like to quickly mention some logistics and then we'll get right into the workshop. We'll stop a couple of times for a quick break, but feel free to get up at any time if you need to use the restroom (which you can find by going out into the lobby and down the stairs) or to use your phone. This reminds me; please silence your phones if you haven't already so that you aren't disruptive to others.

We will be doing work online throughout the workshop, so feel free to get your computers booted up while I'm talking and log on to the Wi-Fi. The password is on the dry erase board. This workshop is meant to be hands-on, so if you can listen and type at the same time, you're welcome to look things up as they occur to you. It won't hurt my feelings at all.

Since we don't have a screen or projector, I'm not using slides, but I'll send you a copy of this presentation via email for your reference. Let's talk about the agenda:

- Logistics
- Concepts of networking
- Get organized
- Quick portfolio workshop
- Set-up: FB, G+, Twitter, etc.
- Hands-on networking
- Wrap-up & questions

We only have three hours today, which isn't enough time to scratch the surface of this gigantic topic. I've taught this class many times in different configurations and with different time constraints and I've learned something along the way. I'd love to make this a workshop in which you are free to shout out questions and provide feedback at any time, but unfortunately this isn't possible. Every person in this room has wildly differing goals, experiences, and skill sets, which can lead to a ton of confusion and chaos if the workshop is left unstructured, even with only a few people. It's easy to spend way too much time off topic this way. It really important to me that each of you leave today with hands-on networking experience feeling prepared to set-up your platform, so I'd like to ask you a favor: As I go through the information that I've prepared, jot down any comments or questions you have. I'll give us a few minutes here and there for questions, I'll do my best to leave some time at the end of the workshop and I'm willing to stick around for a bit afterwards to answer specific questions as well.

Depending on where you are in the process of building your platform, this workshop may seem like an overload of information to you. Don't be overwhelmed by this. Today is just the beginning and you can work on this at your own pace once you get home. You'll leave here today with some resources to help you get started and work on your own. Also, I will send out a follow-up email after class which contains all the links and resources that I will mention today so feel free to take notes, but don't worry if you miss something. The really important thing to take home with you today is an understanding of the basic concepts. This is exactly like the difference between giving a man and fish and teaching him how to fish.

If you'd like to be included on my mailing list, including the follow-up email, please jot your information on the list provided.

The basics

So, let's get started. Let's skip ahead and pretend that you've just finished a novel or a short story. You've done the very difficult work of bringing a new creation into the world, now what?

You need a way to share it with other people, but in order to do that effectively, you need to have a clear idea of what you're trying to promote, why, and who your target audience is. This is basic marketing 101.

You'll find index cards on the table. Grab one and jot down the answers to these questions.

1. Write three things that you feel passionate about in your life. These are things that you would spend your time on, even if you didn't get paid.
2. What are you trying to promote? I suspect that for most of you in this room, it's a book or a writing related activity. Do you have a name for your business? Write that down.
3. What makes YOU different from all those other authors out there trying to promote themselves in cyberspace? If you don't know the answer to that question, you're not alone. Keep it in mind and try to come up with an answer as you develop your platform. If you can find a way to differentiate yourself, you're already on the way to success.

I hope that the thing you're trying to promote is also one of those three things you felt passionate about and here's why: promoting things online is not easy and it's not quick. I hate to start off on what seems like a negative note, but I like to establish appropriate expectations. Effectively promoting yourself is going to be a boatload of work and there really isn't a magic formula, so it's a lot easier if you're passionate about the subject and love what you're doing. That being said, I believe social media is a very powerful tool for those willing and able to make it work.

Let take a quick second to go around the room. Tell us your name and one thing you are passionate about. I'll start. I'm Robin and I'm passionate about change and transformation.

Platform definition

A quick definition just to make sure we're all on the same page: I will use the term social media platform or just platform over and over again, so I want to make sure everyone knows what I mean. This is the series of sites that you build around yourself and your work to be used to interact with the world.

Party Guest

You know how some people are great at parties? You always want to include them on the guest list because you know they can fit in with all of your other friends, are great conversationalists, make others feel listened to, they have amusing anecdotes and are just fun to be around? They energize the gathering and make things happen.

Effectively managing your platform is kind of like that, only with a much bigger potential impact. I'm sure most of you have been to book signings or gallery openings, either for your own work or someone else's. You're walking around the room making small talk, mingling. The author is kind of hoping someone will buy her books, but is doing her best to not be too obvious about it. Everyone is networking. Too soon, the whole thing is over, and everyone goes home to their normal lives. Online networking is just like this, except you can do it on your own time table, at your own pace, and in comfy clothes. More importantly, the party never ends. The book signing never ends, but it's even better than that, because in this case you're both the author and the marketing director. This is incredible, because it means that YOU have complete control over the process. It allows you to have an almost constant flow of interaction and exposure for your work if you can learn to make the most of it. I think we all realize that at the same time, it's terrifying and overwhelming because that's an awful lot of responsibility and you're already busy with your writing and probably your day job.

Two Parts

Our discussion of social media will be comprised of two major parts. The first contains some general overarching ideas and concepts that will help you plan and create an online presence and the second is more practical. Its boot to the ground information such as which button do I click, which software should I use and how do I link my apps with my pages.

I'm not an expert

So - Why am I talking to you today? Am I an expert in social media? No, I'm not. This is probably a good time for a disclaimer: Everything I know about this topic was gleaned by just sitting down and trying things. Trial and error, and then I filled in the gaps by Googling. I suggest you take the same approach. Just start. Start somewhere and you can learn as you go and tweak things along the way. What's the worst that could happen?

While I'm talking, everyone Google my name and find my [primary website](#). This is the first important lesson – you need a website. It serves as your primary hub – it's like home base and everything else should lead back there. Choose "[Connect with me](#)" – the last heading the right. You should see twenty or so live links. This is my social media platform. Feel free to click on those sites while I'm telling you this and pay attention to the number of followers or fans that I have as you do it.

I began my social media adventure in June, 2012, so about little over a year ago. Of course I'd used FB before, and I'd dabbled online a bit, but that was completely different than actively trying to promote myself. I made a FB page at that time, but for a few months, I didn't do much to manage it or grow it. I was busy and I really didn't know how to start. Finally I started poking around. I Googled. I tried things, some of which **didn't** work, so I tried something else.

Today, a little over a year later, I have what I consider to be a very successful and far-reaching platform. That same FB page which started with 0 followers, on June 22, 2012? Somebody tell me how many fans my I&A FB page has. How about Pinterest followers?

Now, I intentionally picked the two with the biggest numbers so I could impress you, but the numbers are just one small piece of it– I now have many other sites, all crosslinked with each other. Just yesterday I received an email from a small lit journal asking it was okay to feature me in the September newsletter. This is a real life example of successful networking. This is an opportunity that I wouldn't have had ten years ago or I didn't maintain such a strong online presence.

I just recently started targeting my G+ account and I currently have hundreds of followers. When I first began, I focused primarily on art. My writing page, which is called More Ink, is much younger, less than six months old, and I already have lots of followers. Why? Because I learned the concepts and now I apply them to everything and this is what I want to teach you today. I know what some of you are thinking – so you have a lot of followers. What good does that do? It's a valid question. A few months ago, I gave a workshop on this same topic, and one writer lamented – what good is a "like"? I'm tired of people liking my posts– I want them to buy my stuff. I understand that and it's a valid observation, which brings me to an important point.

Selling writing is special

What you're doing and you're selling is special. You're not selling widgets, you're not selling something that can be bought at the nearest 7-11. You're selling writing and really you're selling a tiny piece of your life. You're selling your time and your heart and you need to acknowledge that and market accordingly. A quick, easy, cookie cutter approach is not going to work in this situation. Let's face it – writing is not known to be a get rich quick business, we all know that. It's really tough to make money selling writing and I suspect that for most of you, money isn't

the primary goal anyway. If it were, you'd be investing in pork bellies or going to law school instead. So yes, you need or want to make money, because the electric bill isn't going to pay itself, but this is about more than money. It's bigger than that.

It's going to take some time, energy and creativity for you to effectively implement social media into your life, but I think it's worth it. I would like to note that you do have other, more traditional options: you can hire someone to do your promotional work for you, you can enter into a relationship with a traditional editor or publishing house and hope they market you effectively and enthusiastically. I recommend taking a multi-faceted approach. This is what we call defense in depth at my day job. Layers upon layers within a process to ensure that if one fails, you have a back-up. Learn to recognize and seize opportunities when they come your way. Networking is full of small potential opportunities and there is no way for you to predict which is more valuable or what the outcome might be so you have to learn to make the best of them when possible.

Combine lots of different ideas to promote your business, keep what works and trash what doesn't. Do everything you can to promote yourself using traditional methods and then add it to your own targeted social media campaign, and you have a very good chance of accomplishing your goals.

Do you need Social Media?

At this point, I usually ask the question - do you really need social media? I think you know the answer already, or you wouldn't be here.

If you have limited experience with [Twitter](#), [Pinterest](#), [LinkedIn](#), etc. if you're not up-to-speed on how everything works, if you're intimidated by computers, or you think you don't have time, you might be tempted to say – you know what? I DON'T need it. People got along just fine **before** - without pimping themselves out on the internet and there's no need to start now. I'm here to tell you that if you think that, you're probably wrong. It's just the way the world works now.

A real life example: I was invited to participate in an art exhibition in May. It took place in Chicago, there are eleven artists involved from all over the country, none of which have ever met in person. The show was put together entirely using connections that had been made online.

The world has gotten much smaller because of increased communication and improved technology, and as a result, you are effectively competing in a global marketplace. This is good because it means you have more opportunities and also more potential followers or customers, but it also means you need new and different methods to find and keep those connections.

Let's stop talking about the concepts for a moment and switch gears. Find the half sheet of paper, which is a list of social media sites. Go down the list, crossing off those you already have set-up and circling those you do not have an account for. Now I'm not asking (yet) if you've optimized these or if you have tons of followers. I just want to know if you have an account.

While you're doing that, I'll continue on and finish up the concepts section.

Every once in a while, a miracle happens and someone gets rich and famous without really trying, but I wouldn't count on it. In order to accomplish that, you need ridiculous talent coupled with extraordinary luck and a truck load of fairy dust. I don't know about you, but I'm not willing to bet the rent on that. It sucks, but it's true.

Probably the most common response I hear is - I don't have time to build an online presence. I'm very busy and when I do get free time, I'd rather be writing. Believe me, I get that. I have a full-time job, I take classes, and I have a plethora of hobbies. Most importantly, I have a terrific husband and I like to spend time with him. Take my word for it, if I can squeeze in time for social media, so can you. Want to know the secret?

You're not going to like it, but here it is:

In order to become a success at using social media, you need a magic combination of hard work, great content, and consistency. This doesn't have to be incredibly time consuming if you take it seriously and find a way to get yourself organized.

However, before you begin, you might need to adjust your perspective a little. Don't think of managing your social media accounts strictly in terms of #'s. In my opinion, this can be a recipe for disaster. Building a business has always been about people and it still is, regardless of the technology that you're using to get there.

By the way, a person doesn't necessarily have to pay you money to be valuable. Networking and inspiration **are** valuable in their own right. Connections are valuable.

Of course, you **will** need to learn ways to boost your followers and fans. This is actually a crucial part of the initial building process, and numbers do matter on some level, especially at the beginning, but always try to remember that there is a person behind every single number you see online. I've met some incredibly talented, kind, generous people online and my creative process has been changed for the better because of it. I've also met some people online whom I now genuinely consider as friends. An online relationship can be 'real' and valid as long as you interact with people in a way that is genuine and heartfelt. And in my opinion, most people are more inclined to buy from an author that they connect with and are familiar with. Build a persona

online which reveals you as a real person. This makes your work more special to them and increases the chance that they will make a purchase. Rather than thinking of it as selling your writing, or focusing on one specific work, like a book think about it as selling yourself. Your personality and uniqueness must shine through.

It's not quick. It's not instantaneous. You can't just pay someone a one-time lump sum and expect them to build your platform. If you're willing to pay someone large sums of money to manage your sites on a regular basis, maybe, but most of us don't have that kind of money to invest. And in my opinion, you should be doing it yourself anyway. How else to infuse your platform with your unique personality and branding? Building relationships online is similar to building them in real life. It requires trust. It takes time. You have to give in order to get.

I talk to people regularly who want to build a platform. Many of them even want to pay me to do it for them, but they don't seem to understand the basic concepts which I consider to be essential for success. It seems that they want me to take care of the mechanics for them - setting up and linking all their sites and pages - and expect that something magical will happen. Customers will flock to their platform, wallets in hand, and buy their stuff. This is just not a realistic expectation.

Here's how many of these conversations go: A person tells me that they need to build a social media platform and asks my advice. Before I can even complete a full sentence, I'm interrupted with specific questions and comments about how I could market their book. Her book. Her book. They say this phrase at least ten times in the space of that many minutes. I acknowledge the fact that underneath it all, we're all trying to further our agenda, but to me, a platform is much more than one book or one painting. A platform is useful, compelling, and inviting. It's an extension of you as a person. Two facts:

...setting up a plethora of sites and failing to manage them properly is only a teeny tiny bit better than doing nothing at all.

...constant posting of transparent sales-gimmicky crap is annoying and will have the complete opposite effect than what you intend. Most people are smarter than this. Admittedly, there may be a very small percentage who will stick around for this asinine and narcissistic behavior, but the cost - alienating people who could be valuable customers, contacts, or resources - is exceedingly high. It's not worth it.

You just need to think about who your potential customers or followers are. What are they interested in? Why are they interested in you? What do you have in common with them? What can you do to make their lives more interesting or just plain better? Got it? Okay, now go do it. You need to introduce other (related, no matter how loosely) topics to your platform. This will help you find and create content and also broaden your audience.

Some examples: a romance writer could decide to focus on romance in general. Here are some ideas: Post a weekly date night prompt. Allow followers to share their romance stories (how they met, funny stories, etc.) Post fictional online dating profiles as a creative writing exercise. The

possibilities are endless. This is focused on the READERS of romance. Another approach would be to focus on other WRITERS or romance – so share the works of other romance authors, feature stories about the mechanics of romance writing, or post calls for manuscripts in this genre.

This same idea can be used for any type of writing activity: Let's try a group exercise here. Everyone get ready to think outside of the box.

Discuss as a group what genre of writing each person does and brainstorm out-of-the-box ideas for additional content.

Here's the disconcerting part. At first, you won't notice much happening at all. If you're doing it right, it's building pressure behind the scenes. Building, building, building, and then suddenly it explodes. Now you have to work on building up the pressure again. The good news is, the more interaction you have on your pages, the quicker it grows. Which is ironic, because at the beginning when you REALLY need it, the numbers grow excruciatingly slowly, and then as you gain confidence and skill and become less focused on the numbers, they grow daily, seemingly without any effort on your part. If you are strategic and focused in your online activities, amazing things will happen, including sales.

So yes, you do need social media. Most of the things I'm going to talk about today are free and I'd be willing to bet that the majority of us in this room already have the internet in our homes, so basically you're just going to leverage a resource that is already in place. And you can do it at your own pace and according to your own schedule and goals.

BREAK

How to start

How to start? In my experience, the best way to figure something out is to try it! When you try these things on your own later, don't be afraid to look things up to find out how to make it work. If you're having trouble getting a site to work properly or with linking an app, chances are, someone else has already had that same problem. Type it into a search and find out what people are saying. Learn the skill of skimming for pertinent information and guard against getting derailed by info about the Princess's new baby, or even great writing websites. If you're serious about building a social media platform, set aside some time for hard core business and then stick to it.

Get a clean, fresh notebook or use an electronic notes system, whichever works for you. Set small goals and cross them off when you've accomplished them. Learn to jot notes and ideas down throughout the day to use later as content for your platform.

It's better to start with these smaller, more manageable goals because it will build your confidence and give you momentum. I suggest that if you haven't done much on the social media front, your first two goals should be to create a FB page and a personal website. You should always have the overarching goal of building a strong base of likeminded people and fans online.

As you go forth in the upcoming weeks to work on your platform, remember this: I call it building for a reason. It should be a slow, intentional, and sustainable process. A lifestyle, if you will. Make a practice of collecting ideas and links that might be good fodder for content. If you can start thinking of this as a process rather than as isolated steps or individual sales, it will be much more effective.

What not to do

Here's a real live example: I have a very talented friend who is an artist. Her art is incredible, but she is less than stellar with computers and hasn't done much at all in terms of social media or marketing. I receive an e-mail from her one evening. She's having an art opening at a small gallery, can I help her promote this online? Sure, I think, no problem. But then I notice that the show is in less than a week. Of course we did what we could to promote, and in fact when I arrived the opening, it was rather crowded, so someone, probably the gallery owner had done a nice job of advertising. Or maybe word had gotten out about the free wine and cheese. The point is, this is an example of how NOT to promote.

Ideally, you want to build a platform that is deep and wide, built on real interactions and trust and which stands the test of time. You should continually be strengthening and feeding this animal, preparing it for the day when you want to advertise your work, or do something else self-serving. I've been building my platform for over a year, and am in the process of publishing my first book. I got the platform ready first. If you've already established trust and have a history of providing good information, people won't mind a little bit of self-promotion now and then.

What I'm saying is, most of the interaction you have with people online should be about your field of interest or genre, but it shouldn't be a hard sell. People have always hated sales calls in the middle of dinner, and adamant door to door salesman and we still do. If you only get online once a week to post a link to your amazon author store and beg people buy your stuff, people will stop reading, they'll just keep scrolling or worse, they'll simply unfollow or unsubscribe, so you've lost your chance of interacting with them again.

Don't be discouraged. I'm going to give you a lot of information today. You don't have to do them now and you don't have to do them all. Start where you are and methodically build.

So, what should my friend have done? In a perfect world, she would have ALREADY built a receptive platform. She would have a history of posting relevant and useful links or information. She would regularly interact with others, commenting on their works and getting to know people

in a way that is real and with integrity. And that, I believe is the crux. In today's world, we have no shortage of information or input. If I have a hankering for fiction or poetry, I can go online and find hundreds, thousands, or works in a matter of minutes. You must differentiate yourself by being real and genuine at the very least. You are really selling yourself and your individual personality because that's what separates you from everyone else who turns up in a google search. You will also benefit personally from this interaction – inspiration and new ideas will flow from these new people in your life and you'll change because of it.

BTW, I highly recommend a book called [The Icarus Deception by Seth Godin](#). It addresses the changing paradigm of today's world and is very inspiring for creative people of all sorts.

My artist friend should have had realistic expectations. It only takes a moment to type something and post it online, but the actual communication online is not always quick. It doesn't always seep in the first time.

The moral of this story is: using social media will not sell your book overnight, it's a slow cumulative process and it is not a magic cure for anything. It's only as good as when you put in. That being said, it is very powerful if done properly. How can you do that?

Get Organized

First, get organized: have goals, know what they are, and keep track of them. Understand your concept or purpose. Make your promotional life a little easier and more efficient by creating a folder on your desktop called PLATFORM.

Inside of that folder create another one called BIO.

Another called IMAGES_MASTER

Another called IMAGES_OTHER.

Another TEMPLATES

Another called SUBMISSIONS

There is one more very important document I keep here, in fact to me it's the central document for my system– it's called THE LIST and we'll talk about this more in a bit.

Bio

These are word documents. You need two – a short one, more like a byline, and a longer one which describes you and your body of work or writing process in greater detail. You can use these as a template each time you set up a new social media site or account, or to accompany submissions and the like. Tweak them a little each time to fit the specific word counts and requirements. Revisit these once a year, or whenever your work changes significantly.

Last week, I submitted two sets of 5 poems to two different competitions. I completed them both in less than 10 minutes because all of the information was prepared and easy to find.

Photos

Make a habit of taking photos regularly in your life and as you work. Think of images that could remotely be related to your work or to the writing process and collect them. All posts online are more eye catching with a photo. I'm not saying you need to have an image every single time you post, but building a library of images is a smart thing to do so that you can use them strategically.

Obtain your photos at the highest possible resolution and then save these high resolution files in one folder. Name it Image_Master.

You'll have instances when you'll need photos of different dpi (dots per inch) or sizes, such as for a thumbnail or a banner.

Use photo processing software to make copies of each photo at both 300 dpi and 72 dpi. Save them as Title_72. You will use the 72 dpi images for posting on websites and sharing your work throughout your social media platform. 300 dpi is appropriate for printing as postcards, using as cover art, or announcements.

You might consider one last folder – I call mine the image dumping ground – where you can toss your images when you don't have time to process them properly and then come back later and resize and file as needed. Before I did this, I spend way too much time looking for stuff on my computer.

I use [IrfanView](#) or [XnView](#), both available for free download. Once you decide on a naming scheme for your photos, stick with it.

If you make a habit of completing these actions, it'll be no trouble at all to find the photos you need and you won't find yourself frantically searching for images when you're in a rush. If you're not used to doing this, it might sound time consuming, but the longer you use an organized system like this, the easier and quicker it gets. I do it on auto-pilot.

Remember to take photos regularly while working in your study or you're out and about for the day. People love to see bits and pieces of a writer's life and these informal photos are perfect for quick updates to social media sites or to use as background photos for websites, etc. The great things about them – if they're your photos, you won't have to worry about copyright issues. I quick work here about copyright. Please be mindful and respectful of photos. Just because you find an image online doesn't mean that everyone has a right to use it, copy it, or repost it. In fact, I have a story about a woman who actually got sued for inadvertently misusing some images, but I don't have time to tell it right now. Here is the [link](#) if you want to read her story. If you didn't take the photo or have written permission from the person who did, you probably shouldn't use it.

Another option for photos is keeping them at photo sites like:

[Flickr](#)

[Photobucket](#)

These sites are also a part of your platform and can be used to enlarge your audience and allow networking.

Word Document of your site addresses

Keep a word document which lists your social media sites and the corresponding hyperlink so that you have them ready when you're online. Copying and pasting will bring both the text and the link in one action. I'll talk more about this later in the presentation.

Form Letters

If you find yourself typing similar emails or responses over and over again, create simple templates in your word processing program which you can quickly personalize before you hit the send button. This saves a tremendous amount of time. Hopefully, you've already implemented a system like this for submissions (query letters, etc.), but if not, include these here as well. Getting organized as a writer could be the topic of a whole different workshop.

Stylesheet

It isn't a bad idea to use uniform colors and fonts throughout your social media platform. It builds familiarity and recognition for your fans and readers. Keep track of specific details for yourself so that you don't spend a lot of time searching for the perfect purple later. [Hex codes](#) are how colors are described online.

Spreadsheet

I keep something called The List. It's a spreadsheet and my whole life is in there— you can use Excel or the spreadsheet in Google Documents. I suggest the following tabs:

- Social Media
- Writing Pieces
- Passwords
- + more

I use the social media tab every day. With one click I have a reminder of which sites I am managing. I do something I call running the numbers, which works for me because I'm very competitive, even with myself. The vertical axis contains the date, and the horizontal axis shows my sites. I use Chrome as a browser, and I've adjusted the settings of my browser so that when I click to open chrome, my sites come up in exactly the same order as the spreadsheet. I simply click across and fill in the numbers. You don't have to do this every single day, but you can use it to help set goals, and see progress. When you begin, you may only have just a few sites to manage, and then you can add as you go as you grown quicker and more proficient. Decide upon small, achievable goals that you can work on and then take note of how they affect your numbers. An example might be: this week, I will invite 10 people to my page or today I will personally comment on 5 posts on FB. Sometimes I write this goal on a post-it or index card and stick it to my computer.

Configure Browser

Let me tell you how to set-up the browser to match your spreadsheet. I use Chrome, but you can probably do this with whichever browser you use. You'll need to look up specific instructions online for browsers other than [Google Chrome](#).

- Browser, icon top right
- Settings, under on start-up, open a specific page or set of pages.
- Set pages.
- Two ways to do this.
 - Autofill
 - An easy way to do this is to bring up your desired pages in the right order, then navigate to this page, click 'use current pages'.

The purpose of this is to make it easy to check and update your sites and also to serve as a reminder of which pages you need to manage.

Writing Pieces

This tab is invaluable. I can see at a glance all of the information about each of my works. So if I decide to post something or add a piece to a new online portfolio, I use this to easily copy and paste the information. It also helps to avoid inconsistent pricing or double dipping on submissions, especially when simultaneous subs are prohibited. I also use [Duotrope](#) to keep track of my submissions and search for literary journals. [The Review Review](#) is one of my favorite resources for lit mags and they are currently [accepting applications](#) for writers to interview journal editors.

Passwords

The password tab is self-explanatory, but I would like to say a few words here. Do yourself a favor and keep track of your sites and passwords. We've all been told not to write our passwords down and to protect them with our lives, but the truth is, modern life requires us to remember too many of these things and if you don't keep track you will find yourself having to frantically try to recover it or reset it. It's frustrating and it's stealing precious writing or social media time. Periodically change your passwords if this makes you nervous.

I also have some other tabs that I use to keep track of some personal things, but this is the basic framework.

Save this folder in the mobile document receptacle of your choice so that you can access them anywhere, anytime. I recommend:

- [Google Drive](#)
- [Dropbox](#)
- [Evernote](#)

Consistency

Remember me mentioning that consistency is a key ingredient? The spreadsheet I mentioned above can really help with consistency. Decide how often you'd like to post on your sites and then try to stick with it. Write down a timeline in your notebook. Use the spreadsheet to track that. Adjust it if you realize that your goal doesn't fit with reality or to fine-tune your process.

Content

Another of those key ingredients was content. Good content is a must. In order to enable yourself to find and post good content, your sites should be focused. Here's an example: I'm involved in activities regarding both art and writing. Initially, I was trying to target both audiences from one platform called [Ink & Alchemy](#), which started with a [FB page](#) and has now grown to include many sites. I worked diligently to strategically build my platform, but the art one was much easier for me. I happened to be more involved with art when I started and art is visual, so it lends itself very well to social media. It turned out that I mostly posted art related stuff and had built an audience of artists and art lovers, so when every once in a while a writing post came out, it fell completely flat. I kept this up for some months until I finally realized my mistake and separated them into two different platforms. It seems to be working out much better this way.

I suggest that you pick a concept or topic and maybe even write it down in your notebook so that you can remind yourself to stay focused.

BREAK

Set up Facebook (FB)

You need to set up a FB page. There are several ways to do this and FB makes it really easy for you. If you go to any page that already exists, you'll see a CREATE A PAGE button in the top right corner. Click it and follow the instructions. I also have a video on [YouTube](#) that you can watch to see the details. During the process, you'll have a chance to read the data use policy FB Pages rules and regulations and I suggest you do that.

Tip: Use different photos for your personal FB vs. your business page or it will sometimes be difficult to tell which page you are logged onto and posting from.

Profiles are intended for use by individuals, and pages are used by entities or businesses. The capabilities are different for both and in fact using them interchangeably is technically a violation of [FB terms and conditions](#).

Note that your FB page will be managed from your already existing personal FB profile. Once your page is set-up, you need to get some readers or fans. Post a few things on your page first before you start inviting people.

What should you post? Pictures of from your life, studio pictures, updates about upcoming events. People around the world find the South West to be fascinating. Snap local scenery. You can also ‘steal’ content. This is a very effective way of doing it, and in fact will actually yield better results on FB and Twitter. Go to [YouTube](#) and search for related topics or talks about writing – there are tons of great videos out there. Share the link with a comment. Do you have favorite online places you visit? Search for them in the FB search bar, like them, and they will immediately show up in your feed. Share in interesting post to your new page.

Now that you have a few things posted on the page, invite your friends to come over and like you up. While logged into your personal profile page, type the name of your business page in the FB search bar. Go to your page. Click the following:

- Build audience
- Invite friends
- Adjust filter
- Click, submit

Another way to drum up business is to tag your page in comments. Go to someone’s page, type a comment such as – “This is a wonderful book. I have shared it at @ink and alchemy”. This will now show up as a live link in the post. When you type the @ symbol, a menu will pop up allowing you to choose who to tag. This post will now show up in their notifications.

Not much going on in your feed? Go to other pages of interest and look at their likes. You can like the ones which interest you right from their pages.

The cyber world moves pretty fast, but if you post regularly, you can build name recognition, especially among writing circles, and people will stop by and visit, then like your page.

- Go to edit page (from either profile or page)
- Notifications – answer these back with at least a like, preferably a comment
- Lots of choices here to edit and manage your page

- Use the activity log

FB Insights

Click on this. Most of the information is self explanatory.

Overview – consistency can be tracked here. Size of dot indicates # of posts for that day.

Likes: don't be discouraged about 'unlikes' – when people start unliking the page, but you feel certain you're posting decent content, what is probably happening is that your fans are getting more focused and tailored to your topic. It's a good thing. Maybe Aunt Martha originally liked your page out of the goodness of her heart, but now she's tired of your book updates.

If someone likes your page it's generally polite to like them back if the page falls at all within your field of interest. Especially at the beginning when you need to build numbers to get some momentum going. You can see your likes in both the notification section and the likes section, note the drop down menu for pages vs. people.

Something that's good to know: The count of likes on your page is only increased when PEOPLE like you, not pages.

Multiple pages. Is it desirable? Not usually unless there is a compelling reason for it. Having more than one FB page is increasing the effort required to maintain them and diluting your audience.

Remember I said that stealing content can have a better result than posting your own sometimes? I only have time to mention this briefly, but here's why: FB uses an algorithm called Edgerank to determine the visibility of your content. It's a weighted system and designed to encourage networking – sharing of content. It looks at three things:

- Affinity between creator and fan
- interaction with the post (comment vs. like vs. share)
- timeliness – relevant, cutting edge

Sharing is weighted higher than commenting, commenting is better than liking. Lurking gets a big fat zero. Note: any day with no update = zero score

What this means practically is that if you religiously read someone posts, but never take any action, that page could stop showing up in your feed. The same idea applies to YOUR page, so you want people to interact with the page as much as possible. Many other sites have similar systems in place, and if you're interested, you can learn more online. Personally, I believe that if

you follow a good practice of posting regularly with good, honest content and try to interact with others, your page will be successful and I try not to get too wrapped up in ranking numbers.

I could talk forever about FB alone, but I want to touch on some other sites. Diversifying is good for several reasons – FB monetizing, blocking etc.

Cross Pollinate

But first a definition: what do I mean by cross-pollinate? FB doesn't do a great job of this, but many other sites do. When you fill out your profile info, many will give you an option for adding your others sites. DO THIS. Refer to your other sites periodically while posting, preferably with a live link. Remember earlier I mentioned a Word document with sites and addresses? I suggest you keep a document in your primary folder so that you can easily copy and paste your sites in one motion. Hyperlink the address to the text (see Appendix 1). This will save tons of time when cross-pollinating and self-referencing.

Website

You should have a website to serve as a long-term primary hub for your art activities. This is NOT where you post pics of that delicious margarita you had last night, but where you establish yourself as a professional writer. BTW, I have noticed that many writers have ONLY a contact box on their websites and I personally find this very annoying. Please include an email address. Remember, you want people to be able to easily contact you to sign that huge ten book contract. ☺

Creating your website can be free or very inexpensive. To get started, you don't need to know html or complicated programming codes. The resources I recommend have a drag and drop interface and use templates which are very user-friendly. There is one drawback – if you want to get fancy and have very specific needs for your site, the templates might not cut it. At that point, you can hire someone to help, or you can learn just a few HTML basics like I did, and probably accomplish your goals.

Free website builders:

- [Weebly](#) *(this is the one I currently use for my website)
- [Wix](#)
- [Yola](#)
- [SnapPages](#)

HTML and other resources:

- [Joomla Explained, Burge](#)
- [Premium Pixels](#)

- [Web Publishing with HTML and CSS, Lemay and Colburn](#)
- [SiteGround](#)
- [BlueHost](#)

How to choose

Start with basic three (FB, personal and business plus a website). Once you've mastered these three, add the following one at a time, in this order:

- [Google +](#)
- [Goodreads](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)

Google+

- Communities
- 100% visibility vs. 6-12% FB

Pinterest

- Follow at least one board from each if possible
- Keep # of boards to a minimum
- Only join group boards if it fits
- Take note of how many followers each board has and pin accordingly
- Make your own board and invite others
- Show how to connect with others on boards
- Join boards
- WARNING about nudity, even in artwork

Twitter

- Readability
- Re-tweetable – retweets is the way to go.
- Moves FAST – one or two refreshes and you're gone
- Teasers

Blog

Should you blog? Vlog?

- [Blogger](#)
- [Word Press](#) (Note: .com is drag and drop but .org requires HTML)
- [Tumblr](#)

Blogging communities:

- [BlogHer](#)
- [Blog Interact](#)
- [Bloglovin](#)
- [YouTube](#)

Book blog tours:

- [Literary Quill Promotions](#)
- [Virtual Writers](#)
- [TLC Book Tours](#)
- [Bewitching Blog Tours](#)

Sell

- [Createspace](#)
- [KDP](#)
- [Amazon Author Central](#)
- [Square up](#)
- [Google wallet](#)
- [PayPal](#)

Should You Automate?

I'm not a fan of too much automation. There are many methods out there online which allow you to manage all of your sites from one dashboard. I'm not a huge fan, because I haven't found one software which manages EVERYTHING, and if I have to have two, well, it's not that simple anymore. Also, most of them are FREE but place a lot of limits on the usage in order to get you hooked and then convince you to purchase the paid version. I believe that the corners you cut will also tend to detract from the personal aspect that I think is so important. But this is just my opinion, and I'm no expert. Also, there are millions of users out there who are proving me wrong every day, so I wanted to let you know that you can use tools like [Hootsuite](#) and [Tweetdeck](#) to

manage your sites from a dashboard which allows you to post to multiple sites and schedule posts for later. [Hootsuite](#) does have a free version, limit of 5 owned social media profiles.

I prefer to do it myself. I think my spreadsheet method allows me to be quick enough. Not all posts are suited for all media.

That said, there is a new automation tool called [Buffer](#) which I haven't had the opportunity to try which may be more my speed. I'm planning on giving it a try soon.

Mass Mailings

- [Mail Chimp](#)
- [Listwire](#)

Conclusion

Creating these sites is just the first step toward success. You will need to pay attention to the care and feeding of them. Posting, commenting, and interacting. Patience! The building is slow at the beginning, but as it grows, it picks up speed, take my word for it.

- Learn to talk about your work conversationally.
- Business cards – Moo is currently offering [50 free Facebook cards](#) when logged into your FB business page.
- Connect with each other. The people in this room represent a ready-made networking opportunity.
- Remember this is ultimately about enjoying the artistic process. Don't get too caught up in the numbers.
- Think about what you post. Don't post too much. Don't be annoying. If someone hides you in the newsfeed, it's now just an empty number.
- You are selling at all times but be subtle and be kind about it.
- Be personal.
- Punctuation and spelling count. Proofread.
- It takes time and consistency to build a following.
- Don't overthink it!
- Don't take things personally.

You sit down to network. What can you do?

1. Post original content
2. Like, comment or share someone's else content

3. Look at the followers of others – connect
4. Join focused groups – [Goodreads](#), etc.

Thank you so much for attending this workshop. This is a huge topic and it's difficult to address everything in one afternoon, so be aware that there are many resources out there to help you either get started or get growing with your platform.

I know it's hard to write everything down during the talk, so I'll send out an email in a few days to those on the list which contains a copy of the presentation and a resource list with the references and links that I've mentioned tonight. I have a [featured writer program](#) – it's free – and once you have the basics of your platform ready, you are all welcome to apply. You'll find a [form to submit](#) on my website.

I send out an update about once a month, which contains useful links and helpful information on building your platform and I am developing a series of [podcasts](#) which attempt to break things down into smaller more manageable chunks with inspirational sparks snuck in here and there and these can be found at my website. By signing up on the list today, you will be added to my [mailing list](#).

Please feel free to look through my sites to get an idea of how the things I've told you today are actually implemented. I have a [resources section](#) on my site. Check it out, especially the archived mailing list. Lots of useful links there. Go to my resources page for a moment and click mailing list archive. All the way at the bottom is [resources and class list](#) – open it. Another example with great get started links is the fourth one down, [social media resources](#).

I've already built a [platform](#), so if you're new to this, you can use it as training wheels. Interact with the people on my pages. Ask them questions and you'll be off to a good start.

Supplies:

- Business cards
- Resource sheet
- Mailing sign-up sheet

Some topics we touched on but weren't a part of this presentation include: [Adsense](#), [monetization](#), many aspects of self-publishing, email.

Appendix 1: Insert Hyperlink in Word Document

1. Navigate to desired link.
2. Highlight link and use CTRL C to copy it.
3. Type your text.
4. Highlight the text.
5. Click “Insert” from top of Word menu, third to the right.
6. The Insert menu will open. Find “Hyperlink” (looks like a globe with a chain link). Click it.
7. Leave “Text to display” blank.
8. Use CTRL V to paste the link into the “Address” field. Alternatively, you can simply type your link into this field, but be sure not to make a mistake or it won’t work properly.
9. You’re done. You should now have a [live, clickable link](#) in your word document.
10. If you rest your cursor over the link, you can see the destination. Click CTRL while clicking the link to go there. You can change or edit the link by right clicking and choosing the appropriate option.