**Setting Yourself Up for Success as a Professional**

* Determine what you will write.
  + What genre(s) are you writing in?
  + Who is your audience?
* Choose the name you will write under. If you write in multiple genres, consider using pen names.
  + When using initials, consider whether you have periods after them. Some search engines are fickle about what a reader types in, and you want any reader to find you as easily as possible.
  + Search for other authors with your name (there may be some!). If your given name is James Patterson, maybe you want to ride that coattail, or maybe you want to differentiate yourself.
* Purchase domains for your author website(s).
  + Keep it as simple as possible. If your name is already taken (likely if you’re trying to get the .com), try .net, .book, or one of the many others now available. If you’re set on .com, you may have to get creative. Just try to keep it short and memorable.
* Set up your websites, and point your domains to them.
  + Wordpress, Weebly, Blogger, Wix—lots of possibilities. Play around with them and choose what works best for you.
* Set up email accounts for these sites.
* Design your website.
  + Consider your author brand. What makes you unique?
  + Consider your audience.
  + Bio or About page
  + Contact info, including links to your mailing list on every page
  + FAQs
  + Books, with links to all formats and retailers
  + Blog? Forum? Links to other sites?
* Set up a Facebook author page, Twitter, any social media.
* Set up a Wattpad account.
* Set up a Goodreads author page.
* Set up accounts at retailers (Amazon, Nook Press, iTunes, Google Play, Kobo, etc.).
* Set up alerts through Google or Author Mention.
* Have business cards printed.
  + Vistaprint is super cheap. I love Moo.com, but it’s pricier.
* Plan for improvement and learning.
  + Conferences
  + Classes
  + Organizations
  + Beta readers (first readers that will give you overall impressions of your work)
  + Critique partners (similar to beta readers, but with a closer relationship between you, and who’ll give you more indepth feedback on your work)
  + Books/websites to read
* Get Adobe InDesign or Photoshop, Dragon, Scrivener, and MS Word or Pages and start learning them.
  + You don’t need all these, but they’re worth trying out to see if they work for you.
  + Part of the learning process is figuring out what you’re good at, and what you need to hire out.
* Determine publishing schedule (what comes out, when, and in what media/retail outlets)
  + What will you write, specifically?
  + Major milestones for each piece
  + Include time for outside help for each (cover design, beta reading, editing, proofreading, formatting). Once a piece is out of your hands (to an editor, for example), it’s out of your control. Try to agree on deadlines ahead of time and realize you might have to be flexible.
  + Marketing plan (an entire discussion in itself—see the Resources pages at <http://iwoscoc.weebly.com> for more info)