IWOSC OC Satellite Meeting Notes March 2, 2016

Independent Writers of Southern California (IWOSC) [www.iwosc.org](http://www.iwosc.org)

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EVENTS/NEWS

1. IWOSC Saturday Seminar: Creating Appealing Flawed Characters; March 19, 10:30-1 PM
2. 2016 AWP Conference and Book Fair March 30-April 2; <https://www.awpwriter.org/awp_conference/overview/#LARB>
3. Amazon Giveaways can include ebooks <http://www.amazon.com/gp/giveaway/home>

SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

1. Frances Caballo: You don’t need to be everywhere; you need to be where your readers are.
2. Seth Godin: Be judged or be ignored.
3. Define your goals.
4. Decide your privacy comfort level.
   1. You might use separate author and personal accounts.
   2. You might use a pen name.
5. Define your brand.
   1. Your avatar and username.
   2. The topics you want to talk about.
6. Choose your outlets.
   1. List of Outlets
      1. Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/>
      2. Google+ <https://plus.google.com/>
      3. Instagram <http://instagram.com/>
      4. LinkedIn <http://www.linkedin.com/>
      5. Medium <https://medium.com/>
      6. Peach <http://peach.cool/>
      7. Periscope <https://www.periscope.tv/>
      8. Pinterest <http://pinterest.com/>
      9. Reddit <http://www.reddit.com/>
      10. Snapchat <http://www.snapchat.com/>
      11. Tumblr <http://www.tumblr.com/>
      12. Twitter <https://twitter.com/>
      13. Vine <https://vine.co/>
      14. YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/>
   2. Consider where your readers are and what personally interests you and best fits your brand.
      1. Pinterest: women; visual projects (illustrators, children’s books, cookbooks, craft books)
      2. Tumblr, Snapchat, Instagram, Vine: YA and NA readers, teens; visual projects
      3. Facebook: has more women than men; best for ads
      4. Twitter: better for networking than sales
   3. Focus. Start out with one or two at first. If you lose interest and stop posting, you will lose momentum.
7. Use an Editorial/Content Calendar (spreadsheet).
8. Use a social media scheduler or management tool.
   1. HootSuite <https://hootsuite.com>
   2. TweetDeck <https://tweetdeck.twitter.com>
   3. LocalVox <http://localvox.com/how-we-help/social-media-marketing/>
   4. MediaFunnel <http://mediafunnel.com/pricing-plans/>
   5. Buffer <https://buffer.com>
   6. Twitterfeed <http://twitterfeed.com>
   7. Social Oomph <https://www.socialoomph.com>
   8. Pluggio <https://plugg.io>
   9. Tailwind <https://www.tailwindapp.com/?utm_expid=66973155-21.ae-B7-4ET3WlmKvTux31mQ.0>
   10. Schedugram <http://schedugr.am>
   11. Latergramme <https://www.latergram.me>
   12. Everypost <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/everypost-for-twitter-facebook/id572530903?mt=8>
   13. Sprout Social <https://sproutsocial.com>
   14. Bitly <https://bitly.com>
   15. Feedly <http://feedly.com/i/welcome>
9. Show up in real time…but use your time wisely!
   1. Social media can be a time suck. Schedule the time you spend.
   2. It is not a money-maker. Your time is better spent writing your next book.

GENERAL SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

1. From Tim Grahl: All of the things we use to build our online platform – blogs, email lists, social media, podcasts, guest posts, etc – [are all just tools in a tool box](http://outthinkgroup.com/first-1000-copies/excerpts/your-toolbox/). The focus should never be on the tool. The focus is on what we are trying to build – in this case an author platform. However, with tools like Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Google+, LinkedIn and others, we often lose sight of that. We decide we need to use them to sell books then run around trying to figure out the best way to do it. This is the same thing as picking up a hammer from your toolbox and then running around trying to figure out what to build with it. You should never start with the tools. You start with a plan, then reach in your toolbox and pull out the right tool for the job.2
2. Tim Grahl: Social media is not a mass strategy; it is a one-to-one strategy.
3. Tim Grahl: Leverage other people’s followers. It’s easier to get someone with a following to share your content, than to get those followers yourself.
4. Lurk. Get a feel for how others post. Retweet or link to important information.
5. Create your own images using Canva or PicMonkey <http://www.picmonkey.com>. (Images are more likely to be shared.)
6. Use the 80/20 rule: 80% of the time, promote others or give useful information; 20% of the time, promote your own work.
7. Consistency is the key to success.
8. Social media is about engagement, not numbers. Never buy likes or followers. Lots of followers will not make you famous; the number of followers you have is a reflection of your fame.
9. Header and banner images are crucial.
   1. The large image at the top of your profile is a HEADER on Twitter, a COVER IMAGE on Facebook. Be consistent across all outlets.
   2. Dimensions (wide x high)
      1. Facebook
         1. Profile Image: 180 x 180 pixels
         2. Cover Image: It must be a minimum of 399 pixels wide by 150 pixels tall. Make sure it’s a JPEG or PNG.
      2. Twitter
         1. Profile Photo: 400 x 400 pixels, and displays at 200 x 200 pixels
         2. Header: 1500 x 1500 pixels
      3. LinkedIn
         1. Profile Photo: 200 x 200 and 500 x 500 pixels
      4. Google+
         1. Profile Photo: 480 x 270 pixels
         2. Cover Photo: 1080 x 608 pixels
      5. Pinterest
         1. Profile Photo: 165 x 165 pixels
      6. Instagram
         1. Post Images: 1936 x 1936 pixels
      7. YouTube
         1. Banner Image: 2650 x 1440 pixels



CONTENT TIPS

1. Why do people share?
   1. To entertain, inspire, and be helpful.
   2. To express themselves.
   3. To nurture relationships.
   4. To feel more involved.
   5. To spread word about a cause.
2. Stay positive and be true to your brand.
3. Search Engine Land says that content should be:
   1. Well-written, well-organized, and free from errors.
   2. Authoritative.
   3. Informative and interesting.
   4. Visually appealing.
   5. Appropriate for the intended audience.
4. Plan to plan. Schedule time to plan out your posts.
5. Build a library of post ideas.
6. Pick a theme for the week or month.
7. When to post? Whenever your readers are online.
   1. Facebook: between 1 and 4 PM. Avoid posting between 8 PM and 8 AM.
   2. Twitter: 1-3 PM, but use Tweriod <http://www.tweriod.com> to figure out the best time for you.
   3. LinkedIn: 7-8 AM M-F and 5-6PM M-TH; before 3:30 PM on F.
   4. Google+: 9-11 AM.
   5. Pinterest: 2-4 PM and 8 PM – 1 AM.
8. How often to post?
   1. Basic plan: Facebook and Twitter 1x/day; Instagram, Pinterest, Google+ 2x/week; blog 1x/week; email to your list 1x/month or with new releases
   2. Master plan: FB, Instagram, Pinterest, Google+ 1x/day; blog 3x/week; Twitter 2x/day; email 1x/month
   3. Ninja plan: Instagram, Pinterest, Google+, blog 1x/day; FB 3x/day; Twitter every 3 hours; email 1x/week
9. What to post? Keep the goal of engagement in mind.
   1. Industry news.
   2. Photos.
   3. Inspirational quotes.
   4. Useful apps/tech.
   5. Links to articles.
   6. Ask questions.
   7. Leak chapter excerpts.
   8. Offer downloadable free content.
   9. Behind the scenes.
   10. Book reviews.
   11. Recommend anything – a restaurant, an author, a book, a fountain pen.
   12. Start a poll.
   13. Host a contest.
   14. A funny story.
   15. Writing tips.
   16. Info directly related to your book. If it’s set in Paris, something about Paris. If it’s sci fi, the latest discovery on Mars.
   17. Statistics or data.
   18. Ask for advice.

TWITTER (<https://twitter.com>)

1. Why join?
   1. Establish expertise as part of your platform.
   2. Participate in chats with other writers.
   3. Network with others in the publishing industry.
   4. Connect with readers.
   5. Sell books/promote your work – Twitter users tend to unfollow those accounts.
2. Terminology
   1. Tweet: a message sent on Twitter containing 140 characters or less; the act of sending a message on Twitter
   2. DM: a direct message
   3. RT: re-tweet; a message someone sent to you (or posted) that you want to send to your followers
   4. Reply: a response to another’s tweet that begins with @username of the person you’re replying to
   5. Mention: a tweet that contains another’s username (@username) in the body of the tweet; replies are mentions.
   6. Hashtag: #; used to mark topics or keywords in tweets. Conferences and events often have their own hashtag to allow attendees to follow users on Twitter. Use sparingly.
   7. @: followed by a username, it links to that user’s profile
3. Getting started
   1. Use your branded avatar.
   2. Create a great bio.
      1. 160 characters
      2. Keep it professional and true to your brand.
   3. Have a plan for your feed.
   4. Ensure your feed is ready to be seen. Have a few posts up and your profile filled out. Your feed sets the tone. “Check out my book!” is spammy and promotional, so you may turn people off.
   5. Follow active users (remember, they will probably immediately view your feed).
4. FOLLOW Etiquette
   1. Follow those who:
      1. Follow you and are active users.
      2. RT you.
      3. Mention you.
      4. Give you a #followfriday recommendation.
      5. Are influential in your niche.
      6. Are competitors in your niche.
      7. You can only follow 2000 people – then you must have 2000 followers to follow more.
      8. Lists of people to follow:
         1. <http://editorunleashed.com/2009/01/15/twitter-tips-for-writers-25-good-follows/>
         2. <http://mashable.com/2009/05/08/twitter-authors/>
         3. <https://twitter.com/GalleyCat/lists/best-publisher-feeds>
   2. How to get followers
      1. About 30% of those you follow will follow you back.
      2. Post great content. People will RT useful info, not personal info.
      3. Direct people to your Twitter profile and invite them to follow you.
      4. Put a Twitter icon & link on your website, at the bottom of emails, etc. to encourage people to follow you.
      5. Do not auto-DM people when they follow you. It is the sign of a newbie (according to Joanna Penn).
5. Tips
   1. Be yourself, not your book.
   2. Don’t follow everyone. The goal is quality, not quantity.
   3. Engage in conversations. Don’t sell.
   4. Agents and others in the industry will look at your profile/feed. Use your real name, be professional, don’t be snarky/angry/political unless it’s part of your brand.
   5. Tweet about books you love and use @authorname. They’ll often write back to you. But don’t use it to pitch them your project. Don’t diss a book or author, and don’t post about rejections. It will bite you.
   6. Personal tweets are fine, but keep your brand in mind (if you write YA and tweet about the joint you just smoked…bad idea).
   7. If you tweet links, attribute them with an @username, otherwise you could be marked as a spammer.
   8. Others will check out who you’re following, so be selective.
   9. Use hashtags, but use them sparingly (1 or 2 per post). Do not use hyphens or spaces. If you are linking or RTing, use the same hashtags already used. The following are helpful writer hashtags compiled at <http://www.30daybooks.com/why-you-need-to-use-hashtags-a-list-of-the-best-hashtags-for-writers-authors/>:
      1. Before using these hashtags, do a search for them and see what others have posted.
      2. #writetip/#writingtip – Need some help with your writing? These are resourceful hashtags offering plenty of tips and tricks – perfect for novice and aspiring writers.
      3. #amwriting  and #amediting – I’ve heard these particular hashtags referred to as a virtual “watercooler for writers” and I couldn’t agree more! Highly used and shared, these are a must for writers. Both are Twitter “chat” hashtags that anyone can join at anytime and have become so popular, they’ve even spawned a web community over at [www.amwriting.org](http://www.amwriting.org/).
      4. #writerwednesday – I like this one because it really helps authors/writers promote their work as well as giving shout-outs to fellow writers.
      5. #writingprompt – We’ve all been stuck staring at a blank screen, unsure of what to write or how to get our creative juices flowing. #writingprompt offers tons of great writing prompts to help break your writer’s block.
      6. #bookgiveaway – I am a HUGE fan of book giveaways. #bookgiveaway is a great way to let people know you are running one and where they can find it.
      7. #indie – Indie authors are often supportive of each other, so it’s a good one to use.
      8. #selfpub – Great for self publishing tips, news, advice.
      9. #fridayreads – This is to let people know what book you are currently reading. A great opportunity to support your fellow authors on Twitter and get the word out about their books.
      10. #nanowrimo –  The hashtag for National Novel Writing Month which takes place every November.
      11. #samplesunday – A chance for writers to link to an excerpt from their book or WIP
      12. #teasertuesday – A favorite line or paragraph, or a link to a blogpost containing them, from your book or current manuscript.
   10. Craft a great bio.
       1. Use keywords that someone might search for.
       2. Add your website tagline.
       3. You can link to one URL. Use your website.
       4. Create your own background design.
       5. Keep it professional and authentic.
   11. Get involved in CHATS. A chat involves people making posts with the same hashtag. To view a chat, search by that hashtag. #writechat is a popular one.
       1. Refresh your page to see updated posts.
       2. Always include the hashtag if you participate.
       3. If you arrive after a chat has begun, read all posts to catch up. Don’t just jump in and interrupt.
       4. Do not promote your book unless it comes up naturally.
       5. People may not respond to your posts right away. There may be a lot of posts, or they may need time to refresh.
       6. If you’re replying to someone’s comments, be sure to use @theirusername so they see the post.
       7. If you have a protected feed, only people following you will see your posts.

INSTAGRAM

1. Only a phone app. You need an iPhone or Android phone.
2. Users are mostly between 16 and 24, and over 50% are under 30. About 70% are outside the US. High Hispanic and African-American user populations.
3. A must for YA and NA authors.
4. Uses hashtags like Twitter to categorize photos.
5. Follow bloggers who review books.
6. Give readers an inside look at your life – pics of your writing place, your favorite pen or coffee, selfies at the IWOSC meeting.
7. Great for getting email subscribers using the funnel technique:
   1. Grab their attention.
      1. Provide great design and value (this is a visual platform).
      2. Quote images are gold.
   2. Get their interest.
      1. Consider branding your images.
      2. Use low-cost design apps.
         1. Canva <https://www.canva.com>
         2. PicMonkey <http://www.picmonkey.com>
         3. WordSwag <http://wordswag.co>
         4. Typorama <http://www.typorama.co>
         5. Adobe Post <https://post.adobe.com>
   3. Give them a decision to make.
      1. Ask them to like your post. “Double tap if you agree!”
      2. Ask them to tag someone else. “Tag a friend!”
      3. Ask them to leave a comment.
      4. Ask them to sign up for your offer (free content).
      5. No live links in captions or comments.
   4. Lead them to action with as few clicks as possible.
8. Your bio link is crucial. It is the only live link you’re allowed. The action you want them to take should be as easy as possible, so direct them right to the newsletter sign up or to a landing page. AND OFFER SOMETHING VALUABLE FOR FREE.
9. Connect with influencers (bloggers, book reviewers, industry professionals).
   1. Comment on their posts with something meaningful – a question, insight, a conversation starter. “Amazing post!” is not meaningful.
   2. Give them a shoutout. S4S (Share for Share) is mutual shoutouts. You can even buy shoutouts, but costs can be high.
10. Use hashtags. Search for popular hashtags here: <http://websta.me/search>
11. To get a line break in your caption or bio, hit the “123” key at the bottom left of your keypad screen. The return button will appear.