IWOSC OC Satellite Meeting Notes May 4, 2016

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

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http://iwoscoc.weebly.com

EVENTS/NEWS

1. IWOSC Saturday Seminar: So You Want To Get Published? The Basics for the Writer from an Agent’s Point of View; May 21, 10:30-1 PM
2. IWOSC’s Annual Agents Panel: Behind the Screen, Monday May 23, 7;30-9:15 PM
3. IWOSC Reads Its Own, July 24, 2-4 PM at Vroman’s Bookstore
4. Amazon Marketing Services expanding to KDP Select titles. Allows for Sponsored Advertising.

AUTHOR WEBSITES

The perfect website is a myth. It’s a work in progress. Put it out there. – Gigi Rosenberg

1. Define your goals: sell books, communicate brand, inform, entertain, persuade, teach.
2. Who will visit your site? What will they do there/what are they looking for? Consider how they came upon your site, and then determine what they will do there:
   1. Visitor is looking for information on a specific topic (authority).
   2. Visitor heard about your work from someone or saw an ad.
   3. Visitor met you.
   4. Visitor read one of your books.
   5. Visitor is a fan of your genre.
   6. Visitor Googled and found a blog post.
   7. Visitor came across you in a non-writing part of your life.
3. Visit author websites for ideas. Keep a file of screen shots/notes of things you like:
   1. Essential information/pages
   2. Images
   3. Typography/fonts
   4. Navigation system and placement
   5. Colors
   6. Headers and footers
   7. How information is organized
4. Make a list of everything you want to include.
   1. Essentials
      1. A branded biography. Jane Friedman recommends keeping it professional, 100-300 words (ABOUT page).
      2. Links to social media profiles (on HOMEPAGE).
      3. Contact form or information (CONTACT page).
      4. Links to email newsletter signup (on HOMEPAGE, CONTACT page).
      5. Book cover images, blurbs, and links to where sold (BOOKS page).
      6. Release schedule (under BOOKS, or its own page).
   2. Optional
      1. Blog
      2. Tweet stream
      3. Free content
      4. How to get swag
      5. Book club questions
      6. Reviews of your work
      7. Upcoming events
      8. Links to other websites
      9. FAQs
      10. A store for selling your own content
      11. Press kit
5. Decide how much control you want and how much of the work you want to do yourself.
   1. If you outsource your site, will your designer have to be the one to add info, make updates, fix typos? Consider time and costs.
   2. If you choose to build it yourself, how much time do you need to invest to learn how to do it?
6. Platforms to consider:
   1. Wordpress
      1. Free option: <https://wordpress.com>
      2. Hosted and owned by you: <https://wordpress.org>
         1. GoDaddy: <https://www.godaddy.com>
         2. BlueHost: <https://www.bluehost.com>
         3. HostGator: <http://www.hostgator.com>
         4. HELP! <http://www.wpbeginner.com/wordpress-hosting/>
   2. Squarespace: <https://www.squarespace.com>
      1. $12/month for up to 20 pages
      2. $18/month for unlimited pages & email
   3. Wix: <http://www.wix.com>
      1. Free option (with ads)
      2. From $10-$25/month without ads
   4. Weebly: <https://www.weebly.com>
      1. Free option
      2. $8-$25/month
7. Options to consider from a platform:
   1. Storage limits
   2. Page limits
   3. Domain purchase
   4. Custom email address
   5. Password protection
   6. E-commerce (do they charge a transaction fee?)
   7. Can you easily upgrade your plan?
   8. Do they have an easy builder?
   9. What kind of visitor stats do they provide?
   10. Can you add video and audio?
   11. Do I want to eliminate ads and platform branding?

General Tips from Elegant Designs <http://www.elegantthemes.com/blog/>

Create a Style Guide so that colors, fonts are consistent.

Use larger fonts. Minimum 18 pt for body text.

Minimize clutter. Don’t fear white space. You want readers to focus.

Responsive design (optimized for mobile viewing) is a must. Use [www.mobiletest.me](http://www.mobiletest.me).

Simplify navigation. Consider eliminating sidebars.

Take your imagery seriously. Consider buying premium images.

Sliders are gimmicky. Consider the reader experience.

Home pages are not as important as you’d think. People often visit from a side door –

a link to a blog post, for example.

Example Sites

1. Meljean Brook (SFF romance): <http://meljeanbrook.com>
2. Lisa McCann (YA): <http://lisamcmann.com>
3. Henry H. Neff (children’s): <http://www.henryhneff.com>
4. Stephen King (horror): <http://stephenking.com>
5. Rachael Ray (cookbook): <http://www.rachaelray.com>
6. Brandon Sanderson (fantasy): <http://brandonsanderson.com>
7. Hugh Howey (SFF): <http://www.hughhowey.com>
8. H.M. Ward (UF): <http://www.hmward.com/#!/HOME>
9. James Patterson (multi): <http://www.jamespatterson.com>
10. Morgan Rice (fantasy/YA): <http://www.morganricebooks.com>
11. SM Reine (UF): <http://www.smreine.com>
12. Dean Koontz (horror): <http://www.deankoontz.com>
13. Bella Andre (romance): <http://bellaandre.com>
14. Mark Dawson (thiller/suspense): <http://www.markjdawson.com>
15. EL James (erotica): <http://www.eljamesauthor.com>
16. Gillian Flynn (thriller): <http://gillian-flynn.com>
17. Nicholas Sparks (love story): <http://nicholassparks.com/#home-content>
18. Rachael King (fic): <http://www.rachael-king.com>
19. Trevor Corson (non-fic): <http://www.trevorcorson.com>
20. Isabel Allende (lit fic): <http://www.isabelallende.com/en/home/2>
21. JK Rowling: <http://www.jkrowling.co.uk/en_US/>
22. John Le Carre (thriller): <http://www.johnlecarre.com>
23. Nora Roberts (romance): <http://www.noraroberts.com>
24. Roald Dahl (children’s): <http://www.roalddahl.com>
25. Judy Blume (young adult author): <http://www.judyblume.com>
26. Deborah Adele (yoga): <http://deborahadele.com>
27. Maggie DiPasquale (yoga for teens): <http://maggiedipasquale.com>
28. Andy Weir (SFF): <http://www.andyweirauthor.com>
29. Tomie dePaola (children’s illustrator): <http://www.tomie.com>
30. Melissa Hartwig (cookbook): <http://whole30.com>