



SCWC Presents

# eWriting: New Routes To Readers

Workshop by Linton Robinson



## Publishing As a Multi-Level Process

### MENU

- ★ [The Process](#)
- ★ [WebLit](#)
- ★ [eBooks](#)
- ★ [Podcast /Audio](#)
- ★ [e-Serials](#)
- ★ [Cutting Edge](#)
- ★ [Paper Books](#)
- ★ [Resources](#)
- ★ [Credits](#)

Navigate this document by clicking on red links. Menus and contents tables are starred, all red text is linked. Click any red headline to return to a menu.

Use the controls of your pdf reader for scrolling and other movement in the text.

### With readership and rewards at every level..

Modern technology has done much to facilitate and liberate writing, but many writers stick to the same basic strategy for getting into print and getting read: work for years pursuing agents and contracts while your work lies in a drawer unseen.

This manual presents a new way of seeking publication using contemporary media to achieve readership immediately while still seeking traditional publication according to an articulated approach that allows expression, feedback, recognition, and even income at each step along the way.

# New Media Publishing Process

## An Articulated, Multi-element Approach

YES! Our new SECRET PROCESS, revealed ONLY here, can make you rich, famous and sexually satisfied on the way to guaranteed BEST-SELLING success as an author published by actual SNOTTY MANHATTAN PUBLISHING MEGA-CORPORATIONS!

Well, sorry, not exactly. But I think you will come to agree that this new system of getting your work in front of readers is more workable and rewarding than the standard model you've seen described for so long: keep submitting and collecting failure notices hoping that in a couple of years, after spending thousands of dollars, will be accepted by an agent and then a publisher and two years later see a book in a store.

Much of this relies on recent developments in technology, marketing and changes in the way people read books, but it's not gimmick-driven--just a simple, common-sense way of ramping up to publication by a gradual route that involves being published, read, critiqued, and appreciated at every level, perhaps even making some money along the way. There is never any guarantee of being accepted by publishing houses, but this process can increase your chances if you are very successful in building an audience... and if not, you will be publishing and getting read among whatever size fan base you build. Done right it offers immediate gratification without sacrificing long-term goals.

The “route” described here is not a single series of steps, and any writer can use as many of these elements or steps to work for his or her own goals as seems practical or worthwhile. The type of work and your own inclinations and whether you are trying to work a completed book or on your way to creating one can point you to different approaches. The basic idea is to start immediately publishing a novel or other project using one or more of the elements in the main menu, then moving towards more full, wide, and effective publication as you write and come to grips with the market.

The two most immediate publication methods, which you could start up by next week, are what we will call “WebLit” throughout this document, and what we'll call “Online Serials”. They are done differently, and have different immediate goals, but are the

same in that they are both “serial”--you publish one chapter at a time, weekly, daily, twice a week, whatever, and readers follow your serials the same way they would follow a comic strip or TV series.

The obvious advantages in this method are enormous. You can actually write a novel as you go. All you have to do is manage one 1500 word WebLit chapter a week and by the end of the year you can have completed a 78,000 word novel. Or you could be chopping up your completed novel and feeding it out in regular doses. Either way, instead of having to complete the thing, then start looking around for an agent to look around for a publisher to get it to readers, you are actually published the minute you release your first chapter or episode. And since your work is available to be read by anybody with internet access, you can start building readership. You can also get feedback as you go. Some writers do this primarily for the critiques they get on their ongoing work, and use blog comments to improve their work or even to make it “interactive” with polls to vote on plot direction.

There are communities, directories, review sites and other resources in place to allow you to build readership during your serialization. Your fan base can expand to the point that your book will be attractive to an agent or publisher. You can even earn money as you serialize. But even if all you ever do is publish serials that never catch on enough to get a contract...you are published. You are being read. And you are writing regularly and learning. That's what this whole process is all about: the meantime.

There are other elements in this process; Some writers like PodCasts better than written serials: audio serials are also a form of published writing and can also lead to contracts with publishers, or to satisfying fan interaction and possibly income. A “PodCast” is essentially an audio file with a chapter or episode recorded on it for playback on a music player (hence the name, a “broadcast” on an “iPod”). This looks less like the old serial novels of Dickens and Verne and more like the old radio serials. Some writers get very “show biz” with their PodCasts: theme music, sound effects, even different actors' voices. I saw a guy bragging that he used 23 voices. And I have spoken to writers whose “casts” are being downloaded and listened to every week by over two million people. Numbers like that definitely sell novels to publishing houses.

The other elements involve complete books, and are generally a “stage two” of the process. Although some writers have eBooks and/or paperbacks for sale immediately on their WebLit blogs, or serial websites. The equivalent for PodCast, an AudioBook, can also be a goal or a parallel endeavor. eBooks, PodCasts, and AudioBooks all have small but often rabid fanships, communities, and “stores” that sell them. And of course, traditional paper books have their long-standing sales points and readerships.

“Stage three” of this process would be an integrated site offering serials (either text, or audio, or both), eBooks, AudioBooks and paperbacks, along with assorted ancillary merchandise and marketing materials. A mature online eWriter's “store” can be an impressive emporium with reader blogs, artwork, shopping carts, and various bells, ponies and whistles. Or any permutation of the above. We'll show examples of that.

“Stage four” might be getting a contract with a major publisher and/or film studio. A long shot, but it happens (see the Success Stories sections). BUT--at risk of repeating this too often--if not, the writer has readers, support, and sales, instead of a box of paper in a drawer. If you are capable of writing a book that would eventually get published using the traditional route, doing it this way instead can only enhance and hasten the process. If you just aren't a prime time player, instead of ending up with nothing, you can at least achieve the satisfactions and even income of these new media.

Once you move into these ways of publishing, you start “meeting” people online who can answer questions, give tips, and support you goals. But what is almost as significant is interacting in online groups in which people have an entirely different mindset than the eternally-aspiring supplicants typical of writing websites. They discuss how to expand their readership base, whether to place ads on their RSS subscription feeds, which storefront sites produce more sales for their books and chapters. It's not just stunts: it's a new and emerging way for writers to behave and to interact with the reading world.

This is the “plan”. To examine each element by itself, go back to the menu and click on each one that interests you. You'll find an overview of each, some how-to tips, online rerources, and other material to point you towards that particular form of publication. And just by the way, although you can spend a little money to do this first class--your own hosted domain website, some recording gear, publishing extras--it's possible to go this whole route without spending any money at all.

# WebLit

## Blog Serials, Web Fiction, Wovels, Blookes and Twitterature

### MENU

- ★ [How Does it Work ?](#)
- ★ [Set Up a WebLit Blog](#)
- ★ [RSS Subscriptions](#)
- ★ [The WebLit Community](#)
- ★ [Reaching Readers](#)
- ★ [Monetizing](#)
- ★ [Gallery of Web Serials](#)
- ★ [WebLit Resources](#)

“WebLit” seems to be catching on among the many names applied to using weblog software to publish writing (generally serialized novels) online.

Also known as “web fiction”, “webfic”, “blog novels”, “webserials” (what Wikipedia calls it), “blovels” and other terms, it comes down to the same thing: a serialization of a novel (either already finished or being written in installments) in the form of periodic posts on a blog. It's a growing genre with a community, reviewers, directories... and readers.

And yes, several writers have had their weblit novels picked up by publishers.

## How Does WebLit Work?

WebLit can be just an ordinary novel chopped into episodes and blog-posted every week. Or an infinite number of 140 character Twitter “tweets”. Or it can be a multi-media extravaganza that greatly expands our whole notion of what reading a novel can be like. Some “blovelists” include art, music and videos. Some have set up forums where fans and fictitious characters can mingle to discuss the work. Some have created entire social networks that are just extensions of their book. There are fictitious “authors” out there with their own bibliographies, films and poetry journals, fictitious characters with friends on FaceBook. There are interactive maps. You can do everything from a simple block of screen displaying your chapters, to creating your own little cyber-universe. That's one of the big appeals of WebLit, but you don't have to get that fancy to be read and followed. Writing is still the main show. There is a list of some of the more amazing WebLit in this **Gallery**.

The simple, cost-free nature of publishing WebLit--just open a blog and start putting up chapters as you write--is so starter-friendly and low-friction that it could almost serve just as a structure for writing a novel, even if nobody ever saw it but your critique “betas”. But it lends itself perfectly to being the “first stage booster” of a book that, like a newborn baby, has an unlimited potential trajectory.

This “first stage launch” characteristic has also led not only to writers, including known published writers (see **Success Stories** in the **Resources Section**) but also publishers to use web fiction as a trial pad for books. Others have launched WebLit simultaneously with books--**Arcadia Snips and the Steamwork Consortium**, for one example. Some print collections when stories are complete--**Tales of Mu** has run for years and spun off several print volumes on Lulu.com. Others just keep on pumping it out online without bothering with print for the time being—**Dan Leo's** incredible “City of Disdain” and other magnum opuses of the genre are as yet unprinted. **Mayan Calendar Girls** has produced an eBook even more cyber-gimmicky than the blog version. Some writers will complete a story, get out an eBook or Paperback, then either suspend the episodes, or keep going while working on a second volume. The “Serial+” system, described under monetizing weblit, allows the reader to continue serial reading for free, but pay to get the whole story immediately.

## Setting Up a WebLit Blog

Those familiar with blogging can skip the first part of this, which is basically just about setting up a blog, but check out the parts specific to **writing blogs**.

Most web writing is done on blogging software, though there are other ways to go. First of all, though some use content management system like **Drupal** or **Joomla**, and if you are familiar with the CMS programs, they are a powerful way to present your story, especially if you want to use a lot of graphics, bells, and whistles.

But most writers use blogs. One big reason is that they require almost no special knowledge or skills: they are made to be idiot-proof so you can concentrate on posting your writing, not screwing around with tech details. There are two basic ways to do this: use a free blogger site or run your own blog off your own website. There are many sites that allow you to just open a free account, choose from a limited number of “themes” or “skins” or “templates” which basically determine the blogs appearance and form, then start posting items. Some of the better known are **Blogger**, **Weebly**, and **WordPress**.

The obvious advantage, money aside, of setting up on a free site is that there is no need to register a domain, host it, and install software. It's like renting a furnished room for your story. The disadvantages are that you have little control over the appearance and functionality of the blog, no control over the address (what if your site goes out of business?), and you can't enjoy the benefits of a domain registry such as mail service or registering your story on directories.

To have a blog that's uniquely your own, you need to register a domain, then host it. These are activities outside the scope of this discussion—figure to pay around \$80 a year—but there is a very relevant concern when choosing a host. If you don't want to have to learn how to install software on a host site, you want one that already has it installed. Your best bet is to see if the site has **Fantastico** (a package of pre-installed software that you can activate at the click of a button—the site has a list of hosts that have it) or at least has WordPress installed. Wordpress is your absolute best bet, especially if you know little about blog software: it has almost infinite functionality, a huge online support community and thousands of free themes.

If you already have a site with a blog, it's really recommended that you install another blog for your web novel. Your readers will want to follow your chapters, but not if they're all mixed up with what you had for breakfast and who just turned down your latest book. You can usually create a sub-domain on your site to install a second instance of WordPress or whatever software you want to run. So you end up with your blog address being something like [www.mywritersblog.com/myserial](http://www.mywritersblog.com/myserial). If you are just getting into this and starting your blog mainly to run a novel, you can always add a writer's discussion blog as a sideline as [www.greatamericanblove.com/authorsdrivel](http://www.greatamericanblove.com/authorsdrivel).

Once you have a blog running, you can greatly benefit from chats with other WebLitters on **forums** like those listed in below in "Resources". But a few basic concerns:

--Most web serials are done on blog software. And most on WordPress. You can just go to [wordpress.com](http://wordpress.com), open a free account, choose from their limited selection of templates, and boom, you're on your way.

--Or you can have a domain, find hosting (make sure they have pre-installed blog software--like Fantastico--so you can just push a button to have a blog rather than messing around installing). This costs about \$80 a year. You can choose from MANY themes to do this, some better for serials.

--Some writers make what I consider a mistake of integrating a web serial with their blog discussions. Remember that many will read your serial through RSS feed and might not want to see comments or what you had for breakfast interspersed with the chapters.

--Another way to go would be join one of the "collective" sites that feature weblit. This means you don't have to fool around so much to get started and you're automatically a member of a support group/community of web serial writers. A major one is **DigitalNovelists**, run by a fine designer and hosting some extremely well-known WebNovelists. Another popular "WebLit Publisher Site" is called **Fluffy Seme** (God knows why--ask them.) You can find more by asking on the **WFG forum**.

--The overall appearance of your blog is as important as you want it to be. You can festoon it with artwork and fancy plug-ins like flying tag clouds, or you can simply contain the writing.

--Same goes for the amount of sideshows: reader comments, forums, characters with

avatars and Twitter accounts and all that fun stuff.

--Once you have a web novel going, you are going to want to register it with the **Web Fiction Guide** This is the main directory of web fiction and has review/rating built in and a forum...where I'd suggest you do some reading, maybe ask some questions before you even get started on this. This site is the "capital" of the web serial community.

Also, there is a ning.com network just for people who write on blogs, podcasts/audiobooks, ebooks, and phone apps: **New Writing Media**.

## **RSS Subscriptions**

This is one of the really exciting things about WebLit: readers can choose to subscribe to your work by clicking on an RSS logo  to get instant “RSS Feed”: updates posted to their screen when you add new chapters or episodes. They can choose to get these by email, as widgets on their Yahoo or MSN desktops (just like they get weather and sports and stock market tickers) or their MySpace/FaceBook/blog page.

Using RSS well is one characteristic of successful WebLitters, and there are many ways to optimize the use, including monetizing with **FeedBurner** or specialized WordPress plug-ins, or creating “widgets” to post on your sites or even in some forum posts: widgets that show a list of your latest chapters and lead to them when clicked.

## **The WebLit Community**

Once you have a web novel going, you are going to want to register it with the Web Fiction Guide This is the main directory of web fiction and has review/rating built in and a forum...where I'd suggest you do some reading, maybe ask some questions before you even get started on this. This site is the "capital" of the web serial community.

**Clubhouse or Ghetto?** It might take a little straining to define the difference between a “community” and a “niche”, but either way a definite group of “weblitters” exist who know and support each other, share information, and swap ads and reviews.

Some might look down on the idea of being a “big fish in a small pond”, but that's a

community is--and you can be as big a fish as you can be. The upside is they can be fun and nurturing. And if anyone should slight the concept of being “famous” in a small circle: the fact is it's all relative. When I was a kid I knew guys who lived to play foosball or race go-karts and slot racers. There were competitions, hang-outs, magazines for these activities. You could go all the way to the top in these events, be a cover-boy, the champion of your sport, famous to everybody in the kart or skateboard community--and nobody else would ever hear of you. For that matter American NFL idols are often unknown in the wider world. Closer to home, how many romance or historical novelists, even those who sell millions of copies, are widely known outside those communities? Who is the most famous and prominent poet alive? If you can come up with a name, ask yourself how many others have ever heard it. Does that making being a noted poet or urban fantasy novelist unworthy of your aspiration?

### **One Thousand True Fans are all you need?**

In many ways, the most important club/ghetto/niche is even tinier yet: your own circle of fans. In 2008 Kevin Kelly—a founder of both “Wired” Magazine and “The Whole Earth Catalog” and major architect of new models for communication and financing--published an article that has been widely (even “*virally*”) circulated and embraced (in a combination of faith and experience) as a telling “law” of independent publication of creative work: that all you really need is 1000 true fans to support you. “Support” as in...”provide you with the income for an adequate living”.The impact of this single article has, like the more famous “long tail” theory, altered the way thousands of writers see themselves, their work, and their audience base.

This concept, perhaps more than anything else in this or any other message about independent writing, defines a new paradigm that didn't exist ten, or even five, years ago. You don't have to sell millions of copies of your album or novel: just keep a thousand people happy: an individual support group to whom you communicate directly and fully under your own control. Maybe you can't quite make that but can make your rent. Or beer money. Maybe you can do better than subsistence, but there are few things that do more to change an artists life than being able to make a living doing nothing but their art. Or craft, or whatever you want to call what *you* want to do with *your* creative work. You will find the “Thousand True Fans” article and comentary on many, many sites by just googling that phrase, but the original source is on Kelly's blog, **Technium**.

## Reaching Readers

This, of course, is the real trick. And like any form of marketing and promotion, there are a jillion “best ways”, gimmicks, services for hire, and oddball theories. You pick up lore just by doing these things—there is plenty of advice on the forums and sites.

The basic component is basically “internet shoeleather”: making the rounds of sites and releases and announcements and registrations. It's the same as promoting any kind of book or published material, although each element will have its own neighborhood and particular main streets. One good thing to remember is that you aren't looking for fame or collections of badges and “friends”: you are looking for readers. Another is that it's more profitable to promote yourself to readers than to other writers.

And also, to keep in mind that there are other ways to promote than just on the internet. It doesn't cost anything to carry a book with you at all times, have a sticker or sign on your car, put up cards in coffeeshops, canvass stores and hangouts, do interviews with local newspapers or radio shows, speak at libraries. Craigslist is free, but few authors use it.

Start out with the free stuff, then study the ways you can “buy business”. Once you sell a few eBooks or mp3's you have a budget for ads. If you're in a tight niche you might buy some space or classified advertising.

## Monetizing

Yes, Virginia, there are people who make money of their WebLit fiction. And no, not many and your chances aren't that great of being one of them. That said, let's take a look at the possibilities of bringing in a little cash from your Great American Web Novel as you write it.

1. **Sell Subscriptions** If you think you've got something so hot that somebody will pay to access your blog to read each new chapter, then it's easy enough to password the site and see admissions. (Harder to keep subscribers from passing the password around, but you can patrol memberships and delete cheaters). Not a popular approach, especially when some of the biggest names in the genre, like David Wong and Cory Doctorow, preaching a gospel of “free works best”. If this is your orientation, you

might be best off handling this as an **Online Serials**.

There is a variation called Serial+ by WebLit legend **MCM**, the idea being that you run your serial, but after each chapter a note says it will take two years or whatever to read the whole thing, but if they pay they can get the whole story right now.

2. **Advertising Programs and Affiliates** Your WebLit work is a blog, is a website: you can install Google AdSense ads, amazon.com affiliate links, and many other quick-easy monetizing methods. Requires learning how to do it, but it's far from rocket science. In fact most blog software packages have widgets or plugins to facilitate a staggering number of such ads. WordPress, particularly, bristles with attachments for **Ads** and **Affiliate**, and the **WordPress Forums** have plenty of discussion of which ones are worthwhile.

Be advised, though, that the day of glittering incomes from pay per click and affiliates is long gone. People used to brag about \$10,000 dollar AdSense days, but these days you're more likely to hear people saying their revenue covers the cost of their internet presence, and perhaps their own advertising. You can find out more about affiliates by Googling up sites like **This One**.

A special form of advertising placement unique to blogs is to **place ads in your RSS Feed**. This can be done through Feed aggregators like FeedBurner, seen in the **“Resources”** section.

3. **Create Your Own Ad Program** If your book sits in a good niche, you might find an affiliate program that pays off, or even create your own ad program. If your novel, let's say, relies heavily on it's setting in a popular resort like Niagara Falls or Catalina, or works an identifiable niche like paramedics or skydivers, you might be able to approach business to advertise their hotels or tours or gear or whatever. You can have clickable ad banners on your headers or sidebars... of even spaced out through your story. There could be negative reaction to ads (more likely to whatever junk AdSense slaps on your site than ads hand-placed by you) but there is also the thought that solid advertising, well handled, lends an air of acceptance and professionalism to your project. You could also sell “product placement”, such as links to restaurants or clubs mentioned in your text, but that is almost always seen as crass and manipulative. Note that having your own ad program makes it very easy to swap banners with other WebLitters. Not a cash flow, but self-supporting advertising to draw readers.

Not difficult to do. If you're placing ads in your story, you can just paste in links to banners as you post each chapter, probably the simplest possible way of showing ads. Or you can get a little fancier and use a banner rotation script of some kind. Googling, “banner, ad, rotation, program, free” will show you many possibilities at various levels of difficulty. And as usual, WordPress is way ahead of you with existing plugins for **Ad Rotators**. The ad banners themselves can be handled according to your level of sophistication, or the amount you can sell. You can design nice banners to fit a niche, just run whatever the advertiser offers, or publish a list of sizes for their banners. You can get an idea of how that works by seeing this size chart from **Project Wonderful**.

**4. Project Wonderful.** Which brings us to an approach to advertising that is tailored to WebLit, one of those amazing entities that just make you wonder why the whole world can't run on a smart, friendly basis: the eponymous **Project Wonderful**. Somewhere between capitalism, co-ops, and utopianomics, “PW” as WebLitterbugs call it, is the go-to solution for WebLit. You can both buy (by bidding for space...an odd, brilliant system where you take an ad and it stays there until somebody offers more for the slot) and sell (by listing your slots with PW and placing software) ads. Which ads tend to be both bought and hosted by other online writing sites, but not entirely. Almost any discussion group about WebLit will have backlog and quick answers about PW.

**5. Sell Merchandise.** There are several websites (see Monetizing in **Resources** section) that allow you to create “on demand” products with your logo, art, slogans, etc. A popular web serial might be able to generate sales of T-shirts, mugs, calendars, and such. You can also order them to sell at readings, fairs, or to friends and fans at home. Can also be seen as advertising. A really catchy design/logo shirt could be a good seller, and also show the address of your site. Brand gear like this can be seen or handled as self-liquidating advertising or as a cashflow source in itself.

# A Gallery of Great Web Serials

A sampler of what's out there to be read, admired, and competed with.

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Dan Leo's Work</b>             | At least three novels here, and scads of extras. You can wander around in her for hours on end.  |
| <b>John Dies at the End</b>       | Possibly the most popular WebLit serial of them all: and now a major book and possibly movie. Horror/humor online classic.   |
| <b>MCM</b>                        | A powerhouse of online fiction for kids and adults alike, MCM takes a different approach, using higher tech than blogs.  |
| <b>Mayan Calendar Girls</b>       | A wild ride with temples full of ancient cheesecake, archeology tips, and nutso videos.  |
| <b>Lord Likely</b>                | Like a newsletter from the Victorian ages, full of stout, quaint tales for the non-faint of heart and appropriate design and artwork.  |
| <b>Maggie and Della</b>           | A sprawling series of adventures written largely on FaceBook, where the characters are users. Text and audio episodes.   |
| <b>All's Fair In Love&amp;War</b> | Love and War, Texas, that is: a nice homey, bizarre little place. Note the navigation by clickable map.  |
| <b>BoilerPlate</b>                | This is highly peculiar even for WebLit, chronicles of a steampunk robot's interaction with history. Not a novel, but certainly not non-fiction: another poke-around-for-hours site. |
| <b>High Frequency</b>             | Peculiar, contemporary, and crammed with odd links, images and video.  |

<b>Alice and Key</b>	Graphic novel about two graphic people homeless in the “Sims” world.
<b>13 Bullets</b>	Example of a professional writer who does many WebLit novels—most pretty grisly.
<b>Refuge of Lost Souls</b>	A sort of “afterlife mystery club” known largely for its complex structure that jumps around in time (as souls will do).
<b>Kat and Mouse</b>	Breaks through the WebLit dark dire with a brash, fun cyberpunker SciFuture bit of fun.
<b>Tales of Mu</b>	This is the “grandmammy” of WebLit, long-running, prolific, and a major avatar of WebLit's fascination with darkness, supernatural, gayness, and high school.
<b>TV Tropes</b>	A nice list of various kinds of online literature, including some unusual hybrids and oddities.
<b>Twitter Author List More Twitter Writers</b>	These are <b>Twitterature</b> --novels written in 140 character Twitter.com bursts--is there, but hard to link to because you end up coming in at the end. If you're a TwitterHead, you can chase them down through lists.

# WebLit Resources

**WordPress  
Nucleus**

These are all **software** that can enable you to put your writing on line in blog form. Listed more or less in order of preference, with WordPress being an overwhelming favorite. The last two are not specifically blogware, but content systems for sites, tough for newbies. All free.

**Drupal  
Joomla**

**Fantastico  
WordPress**

There is no attempt here to guide to **domain registrars or hosts**, but these are lists of hosts that have pre-installed versions of this blog software. Fantastico is a library of dozens of scripts for blog, shopping cart, and other software. (BlueHost comes highly recommended by WebLitters.)

**WordPress  
Blogger  
Weebly**

These are **free blog sites** that allow you to start an online project right away for free with no specialized knowledge. Easy, quick, and free, but also lacking in control or extras.

**Digital Novelists  
Fluffy Seme**

These are **WebLit collectives** that specialize in hosting literary projects. Quick, easy, free or cheap, and offer an instant community of fellow online writers and a recognized “neighborhood” for readers browsing for online stories.

**Blog Tools**

Continually changing newsfeed of handy **gadgets for blogs**, from plug-ins to hosts to widgets to ad programs.

**Novelr**

Probably the single **most important site** to the understanding and perpetration of Weblit. The oldest, biggest, smartest, and most read site on, as they put it, “reading, writing, and publishing internet fiction”.

**Web Fiction Guide**  
**Muse's Success**  
**Web-Fic Directory**  
**Blog Catalog**  
**Free Fiction Online**  
**Epi Guide**  
**Online Novels**

These are **directories** to WebLit projects, where you can browse for reading matter or list your work for others to see, rate, and comment on. “WFG” is another of the most important sites in this field. Web-Fic is only for speculative fiction.

**WebFiction**  
**Blog Fiction**  
**Muse's Success**  
**WebLit.us**  
**New Writing Media**  
**New Media Writers**  
**Blog Catalog**

These are **forums** where you can discuss and perhaps promote WebLit. “WFG” is one of the most significant. WebLit.us is a sort of collective effort specifically for mutual promotion. The latter groups deal with various types of electronic media writing, but have specific areas for WebLit.

**Feed Burner**  
**Open Directory List**

These are so-called “feed aggregators” or “**RSS readers**” that allow readers to subscribe to an RSS feed of your blog. They get chapter updates by email or see them on their desktop, the same way you see feeds for news, sports scores, or weather. Users of WordPress can find many plug-ins and widgets that make feeds automatic, and customizable in a myriad of ways.

**Widget Box**  
**WidgetEasy**

**RSS Widgets** allow you to create little boxes that display or scroll your chapter updates. Put them on your website, MySpace profile, or any forum that supports their code. These are two of many such widget-making sites.

**efiction Book Club**  
**Self Publish Reveiw**  
**Epi Gude**  
**Web Fiction Guide**

**Review sites** for WebLit.. Reviess can help you improve your work, and allow you to place blurbs on your site, covers and ads--raves from reviewers look good.

**Web Fiction Table of**  
**Contents Plug-in**

Designed by Chris Clarke of **Muse's Success** for web novel writers, this **WordPress TOC accessory** is a valuable reader access tool.

# eBooks

## Format Follows Function?

### MENU

- ★ **How it works**
- ★ **Making eBooks**
- ★ **Upload/Convert**
- ★ **Publishing**
- ★ **eBook Resources**

The eBook (writing presented in an electronic file and read off a screen) is the advance shock trouper of New Media literature, highly accepted, growing rapidly, and starting to approach the sort of breakthrough popularity that mp3 music achieved after the advent of the iPod. In December 2009, amazon.com reported that they'd sold more ebooks than print books. The eBook is barely even “non-traditional” any more and in some fields has become the standard format and star performer.

To the writer, the ebook has several signal advantages: free or very cheap to produce, free or cheap to circulate, easy to make with little or no expertise, supported by a wide variety of reading hardware from Kindles to Nooks to cell phones to ordinary computers, enjoying a wide readership worldwide with active online communities and stores.. Anybody can make and publish an ebook, anybody in the world can buy one online, anybody with a computer can read one.

This is an almost obligatory step in the pathway to readership, and dovetails beautifully with other methods, such as WebLit and serials.

## How Does It Work?

eBooks are at once the simplest and most obvious form of publishing information--and, due to the maze of formats and readers, one of the most confusing and maddening. However, that latter problem is changing and will change more in the near future

How do you make an eBook? That's one of those classic internet FAQ's on the subject, and the answer is typically simple/maddening. To get very basic about it, all you really have to do is provide your work as a file that can be read on a computer or other electronic device and it's an eBook. If a link to download a Word document of your novel off your site isn't publishing an eBook, then what is it? A reader downloads it, opens it in a word processing program and starts reading. Voila.

Of course, it immediately gets more accommodating and more frustrating than that. Most people would prefer a few frills and conveniences in their reading

Obviously, this is a flawed and incomplete survey. Inevitably, actually: even if every possible eBook publication platform was listed here, it would be outdated by the time you read it. A signal characteristic of New Media is that they keep on renewing.

## Producing eBooks

Quite apart from being free to make and ship, eBooks have the strong advantage of being easy for the average person to make. Some easier than others, of course. By and large, producing an eBook is just a matter of running your manuscript through a specialized converter. There is a list of these creators/converters in the next section.

It can be an editing chore to do some of the conversions. If you are writing something with advance plans to put it on Smashwords or Mobipocket, it's wise to read their style sheets first. There is advice online about how to minimize the hassles in conversion.

There are three categories of eBook making. First, loading into a proprietary converter engine that will render you manuscript as an eBook for that particular reader or system. This would describe Kindle, Smashwords, and the free MobiPocket Creator. Second would be the myriad of formats like ePub that can be produced using converters. Both methods have their knacks and can be researched and learned online. Last would be the "home-made" variety of eBook format, such as pdf, HTML, and simple doc or

plain text files. Since there is a great deal of discussion and “how to” files on the web for the first methods, we'll concern ourselves here with the latter category: the owner-created eBook.

## Word Processor Files

Technically (or *reducio ad absurdum*, perhaps) if you place your manuscript's word processor file, such as a Word for Windows .doc file on line for download, it's an eBook. People download it, load it into their Word program and read it. They will have search functions and limited navigation, but they can read it, no-frills. Similarly you could just allow download of “Plain Text” files—an unformatted manuscript in a .txt or .rtf file. This produces a very small, quick-download file that your reader can format as he or she wishes in the WP program on which it's being read. This is done, but it's not very common. People tend to like the features of eReaders.

## HTML and exe Files

An HTML file is very flexible. It's what websites are based on and can include almost unlimited artwork, formatting, animation, cool javascript menus and tooltips, and such fun frills. And can be read on any computer with a browser, meaning pretty much any computer in the world. If you avoid big graphics, it can be read on PDA's, pocket computers, Blackberry's, iTouch devices. The total flexibility and readability should make it a favorite, but in fact it's not. And many people only want things formatted for their Kindle or iPhone or MobiPocket.

A subset of the HTML format is the exe eBook, an odd duck. Even more than HTML, the exe book allows you to do *anything* with your formatting because it contains its own browser, so you know what they'll see. They are usually made on “bundlers” that take a website and compact it into a single exe file that when clicked (and only on Windows computers) opens a page with full HTML properties including java, videos, etc. You can make your own “Vook” video book yourself. exe books are highly accepted in the corporate world, often handed out on CD's at seminars, to prospects, at training sessions. They are *not* accepted by the eBook reading public, even though they can be read on any Windows computer and are capable of staggering creativity in design. One problem is that Windows warns against opening exe files. Many email

services like gmail will not send or receive them as attachments. Another peculiarity of exe eBooks is that the creator programs or “bundlers” are hawked on the web like infomercials with a lot of “get rich making eBooks” hoopla... and offered for sale for a hundred dollars or so. The Resources section here has links to bundlers for \$20-40 and some are free.

## PDF Documents

The pdf format is extremely owner/operator friendly and has a lot going for it: which is why it's probable that the majority of ebooks are pdf documents.. Extremely easy to create, versatile and almost as flexible as a HTML website, can be read on any computer using free, universal readers such as Adobe Acrobat, can be either downloaded or just read right online.

It can have problems on small screens. If you have a six inch square cover picture, it's not going to scale down to an iPhone screen. And it's not a natural fit for mobile readers. But basically, it's a very versatile format.

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(including Word, StarWriter, text, HTML and many other formats) in Open Office (or cut and paste it in), arrange it the way you like it, then simply “Export to PDF” to get a document like this one.

Open Office is a nice tool for ePublishers in general, by the way, because it also has a free template to convert files to ePub formats. It also has a free template that turns it into a screenwriting program, incidentally, and can export to the pdf format that is becoming the most common way of submitting scripts.

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Generally seen as a tool for converting one eBook format to another, the versatile Calibre program is also a comprehensive reader, sync-er, library manager and even an internet news reader can convert online news to eBook. Word processor, ePub, pdf, and HTML files can be converted to eBook files. And Calibre can run on Windows, Linux, or Mac. This is the superstar go-to program in the eBook reader/writer community. Download from the **Calibre site**.

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## Many More Creator/Converter Programs

This only scratches the surface of eBook format conversions and creation. For an exhaustive list check with the **MobileRead Wiki**.

## Making ePub Format eBooks

The ePub format was supposed to be the universal standard for eBooks, but got lost in the struggle to be top of the hill. But it's still pretty universal, and very useful.

The Stanza website lists several ways of making ePubs, in addition to my solution of using the free template for Open Office. Their list gives an idea of the permutations of eBook reading/selling/and producing.

**Calibre:** a free tool for Windows, Mac OSX, and Linux that allows you to convert to ePub from a wide variety of formats. Calibre currently does a better job than Stanza Desktop at preserving styles and formatting of source documents.

**Adobe InDesign:** InDesign is a high-end publishing tool for authors and publishers, and supports the creation of ePub files.

**Feedbooks:** You can log into Feedbooks and create your own content, which will be made available in ePub, as well as other formats like PDF and Kindle. In addition, any books you create and share will automatically be included in the "Free Books by Feedbooks" section of Stanza's Online Catalog under the "User Created Books" area, so you don't need to download and transfer the book separately.

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ePub format."

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**Stanza Desktop:** Stanza converts from a large variety of formats like MS LIT, Mobipocket, Kindle, RTF, PDF, MS Word, and many more into ePub

## Online Coverter/Publishers

As discussed below, this is a very fast, easy way to create an ebook, with the extra advantage that it is published by the time you get through. In many cases you can use the eBook thus created for other sites or your own purposes. There are several such sites listed in the Resources for this section, [here](#).

This is easy and attempts to be idiot-proof, but in fact forums are full of people tearing their hair over oddball conversions of their manuscripts. Best bet is to keep things really simple where formatting is concerned. Most of these publish manuals on how to convert, which can make for some nervous reading. But many total idiots have put books up on Smashwords or Lulu.com, so don't be intimidated. Give it a shot, see what you get, work to perfect it.

## Publishing eBooks

There are basically five ways of publishing eBooks, each with its own goal, methods, and approach.

1. Submit to a **publisher** who either specializes in eBooks or does them as one line of offerings. Since eBooks are cheap to produce and distribute, there are many more publishing opportunities than for print books. There are hundreds of small presses that are mostly eBook publishers and your chances of getting published with them is much greater than getting a print book out. Obviously, this way to publish requires the

approval of a publisher, and could be seen as some ways satisfying your ultimate goal of getting published. Having an eBook on Whiskey Creek or Samhain of BeWrite or Virtual Tales *is* publication. And can also be used to further your overall publication goals. I won't try to list the many eBook publishers here, but they can be easily found.

2. Publish on **Smashwords**. Like Lulu.com, this is a unique and really incredible process. You upload your manuscript to the Smashwords site and they convert it to an eBook format and make it available online. Unlike Kindle, these books can be read by most eReaders out there. A very attractive feature is that they can be read on iPhones--quickly becoming the most-used reader of eBooks—and available to iPhone users on Stanza, the reading equivalent of iTunes. Links in the “Resources” section below.

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5. Produce the book yourself and **offer it on your site**. You forgo any site store sales, have to handle sales yourself, and don't get the cachet of being listed or “belonging” anywhere. On the other hand there are advantages: you control your own price, you can give the book away to friends or reviewers just by mailing it to them. Put up a PayPal button and all sales will come as email to you from PayPal, meaning

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Note that the last three options are true “self-publishing” requiring no approval or selection by anyone other than yourself. This has its hazards--putting out inferior books doesn't help you in your climb to authorhood. But the thing is, you immediately have a book on the market, under your own terms.

# eBook Resources

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- MobileReads Wiki** The Wiki is a “WikiPedia of eBooks”, another super-valuable info library.
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# Podcasts/AudioBooks

## MP3's, Audio Books, Audio Serials

### MENU

- ★ **PodCasting**
- ★ **Audio Books**
- ★ **How it Works**
- ★ **PodCast Gallery**
- ★ **Resources**

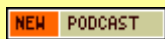
The term “podcasting” comes from “iPod” and refers to the creation of audio files meant to be downloaded, then listened to on music player devices—thus creating “broadcasts” the listener plays at any time. The term has widened to include almost any audio download other than music or video, and to internet “shows”.

Authors have been using it to promote books, or even as their main literary product and some have achieved enough readership and recognition to sell books to publishers.

AudioBooks are simple sound files of a vocal reading of a book, often listened to in automobiles or mobile players instead of music. They are generally seen as a product, but are also good promotional tools for a writer's larger goals. And there have been some very splashy publishing success stories coming from publishing fiction as podcasts.

## Podcasting

Podcast versions of books are showing up more and more on writers sites, podcast logos like these



showing up as ubiquitously as RSS feed icons. It's not everyone's cup of tea, and presents a writer with problems of creating a sound production, but it's a coming thing and opens a book up to audiences that might not have noticed it in traditional book venues.

It's a large, growing, active, enthusiastic audience and fanship, somewhat reminiscent of the early days of radio drama. In fact, many podcasts recreate the same sort of experience our grandfathers looked forward to with the next episode of Dick Tracy or The Bickersons. Another large chunk of available podcasts is like talk radio: sermons, news commentary, advice, business seminars. And a growing sector is involved in audio and video dramas almost indistinguishable from television of YouTube shows.

Some podcasts are available free on line, some are sold for listening on music devices at leisure, some come from app stores like iTunes. The lines between literature and music blur markedly in this field: not just the sophisticated effects and soundtracks for some fiction 'casts, but in delivery systems. Once a manuscript is an audio file, there is little difference between distributing it and putting out musical cuts.

It's a little more technical than the kind of files used for ebooks and blog publishing--or at least a different technology--but is far from “rocket science” and can be done cheaply or even for free. While some authors become real sonic producers, some merely read their chapter into a microphone to create an mp3 or wav file (the length of podcasts, compared to audio books, makes a less-than-thespian voice more workable. But even writers who don't sound good reading might have friends who do. Or contact the drama department of a school with an offer of credit. This can sometimes to a class creating

an entire story-length production with no or low charge. There have even been podcasts using computer generated voices, workable in short doses for science fiction or futuristic stories, perhaps.

All that, of course, assumes that an author is *self*-publishing the work: there are publishers magazines and other venues that produce and disseminate podcasts.

Casts can be subscribed to by RSS, or with the many special “podreaders” available for fans to access and listen to their favorite works.

Like ebooks and weblit, most podcast material is provided for free, often as promotional material or to bolster sales of books or other media. Or to build enough readers to interest a publisher: see the Success Stories section of the Resources for this manual.

It's certainly possible, however, to “monetize” or outright sell podcasts, to get paid subscribers through any of several means discussed under Monetizing. Basically, a podcast that charges listeners would be considered a “Serial”, so see that chapter for more on how to proceed along those lines.

One problem for podcasters, especially in seeking out sites to promote, discuss, or improve their work, is that books are a sort of “poor stepchild” of the overall podcasting world, which tend to center around “shows”--mp3 broadcasts that resemble radio shows, TV serials, or comedy/vaudeville sketches, rather than literature.

One example of this would be the **PodCast Awards**, whose many categories don't include books or literature. One solution to this would be for a group of writers to try to convince them to add the category. That said, there is a large community of writers who present their work in audio format and it's a tight community to be accessed through the sites and forums under Resources in this section.

## Audio Books

There is less to be said about AudioBooks, although it's a much greater sales area with a long history of reader acceptance: people were buying books on cassettes long before mp3 players were around.

Currently **AudioBookstore** and **Audible.com** sell titles numbering in the six figures in both mp3 and CD formats. These titles tend to be best-sellers and other releases from big publishing houses, but it illustrates an audience out there. A writer can just as easily sell an audio book of a site in the form of a download or mail attachment as an eBook or PodCast. And there is good reason to do so.

AudioBooks have the same production situation as PodCasts, perhaps more so in that they are much longer and need to be pleasant listening for hours, as well as the greater task in producing them. (Obviously, if you have already produced an entire story as a series of PodCasts, production of an AudioBook is merely a question of stringing them together in an editing program.) On the other hand, they don't call for any of the formatting, such as music and intros and sound effects that some use in PodCast serials. So, like the eBook, the AudioBook offers a way you can sell your entire novel in an electronic format to a group of people who are equipped to, and comfortable with, accessing it with their own gear.

My impression is that it's a little harder to really “break in” as an audiobook because so many are offered through big online sites that push audio versions of best sellers and blockbusters. But that's not to say that you can't get out there and get noticed through what is essentially a “vocal ebook.” And just as an ebook might be the culmination of a web serial or weblit novel, an audiobook is the perfect way to package and sell a podcast serial.

## How Does it Work?

There are really three steps in creating audio versions of your books: make and edit audio files of your work such as mp3's, placing them on the internet for listening or purchase, and bringing people to your site to hear and/or buy them. A fourth step might be some subscriber delivery system such as email or RSS feed.

The first part might sound forbidding to writers since it involves producing audio rather than text, but is really the straightforward part of the process. All you really need to do is download a free audio editor (such as my constant recommendation and a widespread favorite of 'casters, **Audacity**) and a microphone, maybe build a “booth” for recording (pad a box with eggshell foam and suspend your mike in it) read your book into the mike, edit the resulting files and export them as mp3's and there you are. Put it on the internet and it's a PodCast, put it on a CD and it's an Audio Book.

There is little point in a detailed “how to” here because the Internet is swarming with “how to make podcasts” articles and tutorials. I'll show one here: bear in mind any such method will look more forbidding as text out of context than when actually handling a program like Audacity or Wavepad, which are pretty instinctual and self-explained. **This one** on the Podio forums is typical:

### Create Source

Create with Audacity bitrate 44.1 kHz

Save to wav

Use Levelator to smooth levels. Some people claim it should be used BEFORE music is added, but I find it works fine with music too.

### MP3 Encoding

Use Wavepad (free software) or some other software to produce MP3

Required File Name: PB-Title-NN.mp3

where Title is the title of your book and NN is a 2 digit number

Example: PB-TimeCrystal-29.mp3

### **iTunes**

Start iTunes, drag the file into iTunes LIBRARY Music folder and right-click the file and select Get Info. A window opens. Select the Info tab.

### **AudioShell**

Right-click the file in Windows Explorer and select AudioShell Tag Editor.

NAME (called TITLE in some ID3 taggers)

Example: Time Crystal 1-01

Comment: Your choice here. I suggest using a short name for your book (doesn't have to be the full title) and then a double-digit sequential order of the episode in question. This helps people find your episode(s) inside their larger list of episodes from multiple sources. Your book and the episode number are the most important pieces to communicate.

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The tutorial goes on about adding various tags and labels to the mp3, but the idea is... a couple of free programs, a microphone (perhaps with a home-made “booth” that could be no more than a box lined with foam or pillows and the mic suspended inside), and some fooling around and you have a podcast file on your hands.

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```
[AutoRun]
```

```
OPEN=FleshWounds.exe
```

```
label=FLESH WOUNDS:Darkness Has A Heart
```

```
icon=logo.ico
```

You can make the autorun open an html “splash page” if you want, or any file explaining how to access the file that contains your work.

# Gallery of PodCasts

A sampler of what's out there to be heard, heeded, and handled.

<b>Variant Frequencies</b>	Several <b>channels</b> of different genres of podcast.
<b>Playing For Keeps</b>	A much-mentioned title in these circles, and click for an <b>excellent example</b> of our main “multi-process” theme: you'll see a PodCast novel, print version, iPhone app, and whatever comes next.
<b>PodCastle</b> <b>PseudoPod</b> <b>EscapePod</b> <b>ShadowCast</b>	These are publishers of audio episodes and stories: essentially, <b>PodCast magazines</b> --and thus, <b>markets</b> . Very useful for building readership and learning the ropes of audio literature production. Specialties, in order from top: fantasy, horror, SciFi, “Dark”.
<b>Tor</b>	<b>SciFi publisher</b> has an index of free and paid podcasts.
<b>Some Other Scotland</b>	“ <b>Radio broadcasts</b> ” from ancient and modern Scot history.
<b>Decoder Ring Theater</b>	Invokes those days of <b>classic radio serials</b> with several pulpy fiction series and a grab bag of mystery, comedy and SciFi.
<b>Crescent Station</b>	Long-running <b>Cthulu-Punk podcast</b> now available in print edition and signed soundtrack CD.
<b>Sonic Society</b>	This Canadian site links to <b>dozens of audio lit writings</b> all over the world, and has a lot of good information for new writers.
<b>In The Blood</b>	Notice: video trailer, <b>monetized</b> , clip from radio interview.
<b>Conversations Network</b>	Many “ <b>talk</b> ” <b>podcasts</b> , including many on the topic of podcasting.
<b>Mind Wings</b> <b>Snippets</b>	Publish <b>audio short fiction</b> , for payment or royalty.

# Podcast/Audio Resources

## My PodCast

**Records it, uploads it, converts it** to a 'cast for the iTunes store!  
Instant PodCasts for newbie/techphobes.

## Posterous.com

This **email posting site** is the last word in placing things online for access (read: ePublishing) eMail your mp3 file to the site and it's automatically on line, ready to download as a podcast.

## Podcast Tools

A great, comprehensive site of **tools** for any prospective podcaster.

## iTunes Podcast Resources iTunes "How To Podcast"

**iTunes** is a Mecca for Podcasts and this is a great place to find out more about the whole genre.

## Podcast Alley

Good **general information**... heavily slanted towards “production” casts rather than fiction, but a lot of good resources and information.

## BlogUniverse Submit to Lists More Directories

These are **directories** or lists of podcasts. You can list your project on them for free. The first lists blogs, which you probably using to launch your podcast.

The last one is a “directory of directories” with many dozens of general and specialized listing site

## CreateSpace CDBaby TuneCore AudioBook Seller List

These are **online stores** that will sell your mp3 “book” as a download. It's not uncommon to find many such sites to be music sites—you won't get browsers, but can send traffic to them to buy. The last is a long list of distributors from amazon.com

## Podcast Alley Forum RSS/PodCast Forums PodioBooks Forum

These **forums** offer the chance to learn from the more experienced and keep up with new developments.

## **Audacity**

A **simple, free all-platform program** that many, many podcasters and video-makers swear by. Record, edit, cut, and splice sound files, do a certain amount of effects like fade in/out. You should have this.

## **Levelator**

A free, cross-platform program that **automatically smooths sound** levels to make your podcast sound better. A must.

## **Wave Pad**

Free tool for **making mp3's from WAV files** made and modulated in the two tools above. Easy to use, fantastic control over sound.

## **AudioBookstore**

### **Audible.com**

### **Leisure AudioBooks**

### **New PodCast Review**

### **Podagugue**

### **IdiotVox**

**Online stores** selling Audio Books, among many many more.

**Review sites** for PodCasts and AudioBooks.

# e-Serials

## In Next Week's Thrilling Episode...

### MENU

- ★ **How To?**
- ★ **eSerials List**
- ★ **Resources**

Online serials get lost in the shuffle: google it and you get WebLit and YouTube TV shows and Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog. But it's a separate activity with its own followers and fans. The idea is to provide a stream of regular chapters or episodes of a story, which readers pay for, like comic books or the old newspaper serialized novels of Dickens and Verne. One way to look at it might be that it's just like WebLit or episodic PodCasts...except that it generates a cashflow. Ideally

### So What's an eSerial?

Or WebSerial or Online Serial or whatever you want to call it? (Wikipedia uses “webserial”) Basically, it's an extension of a very venerable literary tradition: presenting a novel publicly in regular installments, rather than all at once. Charles Dickens, Jules Verne and Arthur Conan Doyle wrote many classics by the week. “Uncle Tom's Cabin” was a serial. Stephen King's “Plant” and “Green Mile” were written as serials. Orson Scott Card and Cory Doctorow are two major contemporary writers who serialize, often with **Tor**, a publisher very invested in current serials, and worth a look to see the innovations going on in the SciFi/Fantasy field alone.

And that's just the printed word--not the only kind of serial writing you might consider. The audio serial also has a long history, including the thrilling weekly dramas and comedies in radio's golden age. One of the mainstreams of modern online serialization

is in some form of PodCast, for which see that section.

One question that might arise: what's the difference between a “WebLit” blog and a “WebSerial”? And there's no real line. One distinction that some hold to is that WebLit or a PodCast becomes an “Online Serial” when it's for sale. And in fact, people who call their story a “serial” tend to be more interested in selling episodes than just getting read or building their brand--but there's no real line.

Another distinction that has been posed is between stories that actually have an online presence and those that don't necessarily reside on the internet. The early eSerials were emailed to subscribers: there was nowhere they could be read online. Twitter novels (with their characteristic 140 character episodes, are the same way, you get the tweets, but there is no necessarily a place to go read the whole series unless the author sets up a blog for it.

One more distinction might be between stories that have a firm ending date, when the story is “over”, and those that just roll on forever like Tales of Mu. If you are not writing on the fly, but chopping a completed novel down into episodes, what you are doing, by whatever means of showing it--blog, podcast, email, newspaper, skywriting--it's a “serialization”.

But the real issues to anybody looking at this form of writing/presenting are; internet, episodic, and payment. Even if your book is never put online, you will have a site to attract people to for payment, download, and subscription. The idea of the story being episodic is pretty definitive, though of course you can at any point sell the whole story as a book, ebook, or mp3 album.

You might decide not to charge, or you might charge later in the series, or you might adapt one or more of several monetizing schemes. Ways of collecting and delivering are listed in the main Resource section under “**Monetizing**”, along with sidelines like selling branded merchandise. You can find some cash-flow plans listed in the WebLit **monetizing** section, as well.

In the Sampler section below you can explore WebSerials with a variety of approaches to cashing in, and none has really shown itself to be dominant or preferred over the others. You can charge for access to a site or download area, place episodes on download sites for pay, charge by PayPal and mail them out, sell subscriptions to email delivery, start a serial for free and start charging later, ask for donations, sell ads on the site, use the “Serial+” system of weekly for free but payment to get the whole thing immediately as a book or file.

The question is, How significant is the potential income from online serials? And the answer, realistically, is, Pretty small change. The big advantage is probably in using the serials as draws to gain readers or contracts for further work. Most PodCast serials aren't really “books” but more like “shows”, the competition with free online novels makes it hard to charge much unless you are offering something of very special appeal.

However... that's the plan this worksheet is putting forth. With the added possibility of picking up some money along the way. Perhaps paying for your website or your sixpack. Or trading ads out for further building. And it's not like it's impossible to make decent money of serials. If you have gathered and nurtured the storied Thousand True Fans, and they will pay a dollar a week for your writing, that's \$52,000 a year.

You can decide based on your work, your promo savvy, and your readership whether to concentrate on going for the money or the exposure/building. Or--and this is what we're all about here--both at once.

## **How Does It Work?**

There is no one best way to put up serial on line. For instance, the serial could be text or an audio file. But basically, the process would require a couple of distinct steps:

--Decide the medium and format your serial would take. This might be an audio podcast, it might be blog-driven with RSS feed or a password to enter, it might be an email list in which you send episodes as text or html, ebook, mp3 file, ,zip file or any other means of getting the writing to the readers.

---If you decide to use a blog, use the **WebLit** section pf this manual on tips of how to set that up. Examine other blog-based serials and the plug-ins available to you to see how you can charge for readers, and which way you want to do it.

---If you are thinking in terms of audio episodes, read the **PodCast/AudioBooks** section on how to proceed. There are many avenues open for spreading and collecting for PodCast episodes, as shown in the resources table of that section.

---Delivery by email is not really discussed in this manual, but is obviously not difficult to do: just include your episode files as “Attachments” when emailing your readers. Most mail systems allow you to automate this process. For instance, you should be able to schedule a mailing to a certain list on each

Monday or whatever, and to include an attachment called “thisweek.pdf” or “nextepisode.mp3” or whatever. All you have each week is rename the previous episode as “episode 23.htm” or whatever and rename a new one to the designated attachment file name.

If you are collecting from PayPal, you will automatically receive the reader's email. This is probably the easiest way to charge for episodes and work as a Pay Button from a site that gives examples, or shows past episodes.

--Decide how you will collect for your episodes. Several ways of doing this are discussed in the sections cited above and you can utilize your choice of “**Monetization**” methods in the general Resources section. In addition to PayPal, or putting your files onto the various “stores” listed there, you can use other means of collection if they suit your style, level of sophistication, and preferred margin of profit: sites like Espy or eBay, for instance.

And don't overlook sidelines like ads in your feeds or mailings, branded merchandise, or the “Serial+” system of running free serials, but selling the completed story to those who want to read the whole thing. Or coming out with a book once the serial has completed its run.

## **The “SweepStakes Serial”**

There is another, very specific way of serializing fiction online, what I'll call the “Sweepstakes Serial”. This is less like selling and more like a contest--but a contest that isn't about luck or even necessarily quality. You put your book up on a special site

in installments where people can read it, link to it, “bookmark it”, review/critique it, and rate it. The kicker is, top ratings lead to consideration for publication and possibly cash prizes. Sometimes outside votes are involved in these ratings, with writers canvassing friends to come vote for their work.

One way to look at these sites is that if you are doing an online serialization, it's easy enough to double-post each episode to your own site/blog and also to the contest site.

Like many forms of online peer review, these sites tend to reward the relentless networker and log-roller who swaps reviews, promotes his work. The classic is [Authonomy](#), in which top-rated work for each time period can land on the “desk” of editors at Harper Collins (UK) and be considered for publication at HC. There have been a few books “discovered” on this site and published.

Another is [textnovel.com](#), where the top-rated work takes home \$1,000 (and special prizes like \$2,000 from Dorchester for the top-rated romance novel).

# Sampler of e-Serials

A sampler of what's out there to be read, admired, and competed with.

## DailyLit

A collection of serials novels you can subscribe to by email, RSS feed, and even Twitter (including Cory Doctorow's latest)

## Run Maggie Run

This series of MobiPocket “episode books” by John Ivor sell for under a dollar apiece. The series is somewhat “Dickens meets Perils of Pauline”. Writer interested in serials should take a look, and at the other titles and general presence of the publisher, Australia-based **Darling Newspaper Press**

## Realms Of Light

Several serials by Doug Walt--and his excellent FAQ, explaining a few things about “reader-supported serials”.

## The Girl Who Circumnavigated Fairyland

Catherynne M. Valente A lovely serial that accepts reader donations and springboards sales of a series of eBooks.

## Daughters of Freya

A different approach to paid serials: get the first three chapters free, pay to subscribe to a regular email list for the rest...or buy the eBook.

## The Big Meow

Forties Hollywood noir. This works on a one-time subscription payment, that covers getting all the episodes regularly by email.

## Denver Cereal

One of the better-known serials

## In The Blood

Notice: video trailer, monetized, clip from radio interview.

## Twitter Author List More Twitter Writers Thaumatrope

**Twitterature**--novels written in 140 character Twitter.com bursts--is there, but hard to link to because you end up coming in at the end. If you're a TwitterHead, you can chase them down through lists. Thaumatrope is a magazine of Twitter fiction.

# eSerial Resources

## Tools for getting serial about your writing

<b>DailyLit</b>	Sends daily episodes by <b>RSS or email</b> .
<b>ISSN U.S</b> <b>ISSN Intl.</b>	These numbers <b>identify serials</b> the way ISBN numbers identify books. And are free.
<b>Weblit Resources</b> <b>PodCast Resources</b>	These tables in other sections have the <b>links to technical resources</b> helpful to anybody planning on putting up a serial.
<b>New Writing Media</b> <b>Writers Digest Serials</b>	These are <b>forums</b> where serial writing is discussed.
<b>Rose and Bay Award</b>	This new award is for “crowd-funded” fiction, meaning it's marketed directly to an audience online, with money involved somehow.
<b>PayPal</b>	Almost any way you figure out to <b>get money from your serial</b> , you will need a PayPal account to collect. Fortunately, it's easy to get one and create “Buy Buttons”. For other Monetizing methods, see that section in the <b>Resources</b>
<b>PayLoadz</b> <b>Trade Bit</b>	These are very valuable sites-- <b>download stores</b> . Place the files for your serial on them. people pay to download the file, and you get a check from PayPal, less a small fee--essentially your own online store.
<b>Etsy</b> <b>eBay</b> <b>Craigslist</b>	These are other “ <b>stores</b> ” <b>where an independent writer can sell things</b> . Remember, with a PayPal account you can actually eMail people a Buy button if you want.

# New, Cutting Edge Media

## Tomorrow On Line One

### MENU

- ★ Say What?
- ★ How To?
- ★ Phone App Stores
- ★ Resources

This section might as well be called **iPhone App Novels**, actually. Because that's the bleeding edge of “literary content delivery”... as of five minute ago. There's a good chance the idea of people buying a novel on the Apps Store and reading it on the screen of their cell phone never occurred to you. And a chance that the idea of reading off paper will never occur to your grandchildren. That's the way edges cut. So this section will mostly be about using mobile devices to deliver your novel to the host of avid eyeballs, with the proviso that it's really about keeping your own eyes peeled: things are breaking rather fast in the world of literature; new marvels upon us before we pull our socks up. And the rosy dawn of new ideas is where indie author, the hungry newbie can carve out a niche--often by just being there and letting a new village grow up around him.

### Say What?

For writers still getting to used to focusing past books printed on paper, the **advent of novels as mobile phone gizmos** is somewhat jarring. We are still hearing about how Kindle is a revolution in reading and now it's apparently old hat and people are reading Dan Brown and Dickens on their cell phones and positioning devices. The trouble with new waves is there's always a new one breaking right behind it—and the current state of



writing/reading seems at times like being in a washing machine.

For those who, like me, don't have a cool mobile phone, “apps” are the little applications whose icons or “buttons” you see on screens of phones, like the colored icons on the iPhone to your right.



They can be purchased online from among the thousands of other applications and games available, downloaded to a phone, then accessed for reading (probably with the phone turned horizontal) by clicking one of the little icons you see on the screen—a Harry Potter title icon is shown at left.

If you *do* have an iPhone or iTouch, or other “smart phone” capable of a reader program or all download, you are in a position to promote by phone, essentially. And not just texting about downloading your novel app; you always have your phone on you--on the bus, at work, the beach or gym--and can always flash it at somebody, show them the icon of your app. That's pretty impressive these days, maybe more than showing them a book. One thing about this format of literature: it's very “now”, very hip, very eVisible.

This doesn't look like a CB radio-type fad, but a way of reading that people are embracing as fast or faster than readers like Kindle or Nook. Almost certainly a powerful, coming thing. Trade reporters are telling us that books account for one in five phone apps sold, that sales of books in app stores are passing those of games. Now that these “books” are available, people are wondering why they should pay a lot of money for a larger device that only does one thing, when they already have their phone/music player/camera/direction device in their pocket or purse. Much has been made of the fact that there are around two million eReaders out there. But compare that to over eighty million “smart phones” that are capable of displaying such apps--over fifty million iPhone/iTouch units alone. That's a major market base, and it's far too soon to tell how far app readership will spread.

One possible downside is that apps sell much cheaper even than eBooks. The popular “Jack Daniels” novels by J.A. Konrath, an author who independently embraced app novels early, sell for a dollar or two as phone apps. If you “self-publish” on one of the new stores you might get thirty to sixty percent of that, depending on your initial set-up fee. So, thirty cents to a dollar twenty per sale. Compared to a dollar or two from POD books or royalties from a publishing house. Obviously, for Dan Brown's publishers, this income is merely gravy, something coming in from a new market source without additional expenditure (and “The DaVinci Code” app might be selling for seven bucks, as well).

On the other hand, if it's the future, it's a good idea to get on it and ride it. And for a new author, this kind of book can provide a quick entry into the eyeballs of the internet and readers. And possibly create a market for other forms of the book.

## **How To?**

**Creating a phone app** is a lot more technoid and expensive than a website, or even a print run of physical books. Freelancers and companies who make them charge from \$500 to \$20,000 to much higher--MUCH higher--to produce them. You can make one yourself from your manuscript, but it's no picnic, even for people used to doing html, css, and java design.

**However...** you shouldn't have to go through that unless you want to. There are publishers arising almost day to day, who accept your manuscript and put it out on their store or the iTunes store or wherever, just like publishing a book. See the list in the “Resources” table for this section.

A major advantage to new or independent writers is that, while big publishers are putting out apps, and there are small outfits, such as Virtual Tales, publishing them, many of these new producer/publishers are a pure self-publishing enterprise like Lulu.com. You pay a conversion fee and your book app is available for purchase.

There are two different approaches to having your book as an app on a store: a native app, and website invoked by the phone. Both might look the same on the phone: a little icon that you click and a cover or table of contents comes up and you start reading. But they are as different as having an eBook on your computer and accessing somebody's website.

Both of these methods are available in the “more or less affordable” range. (As opposed to having an app made for you from scratch which is absurdly expensive. There are developers that hook you up with a site app, then charge monthly fees to be on their server. Others charge just to place you on iTunes, where it can take months to get accepted.

Your best bet, is to hook up with a publisher that places apps. Some of the innovative small presses are actually entering this field at a level competitive with the big boys: creating a free-standing native app is a bit high for most writers, but cheaper in volume--and much cheaper than a press run. If you can get an ebook accepted by **Virtual Tales**, it's automatically a phone app.

More useful and accessible yet, there is **Kobo Books**, the “**Lulu.com of phone apps**”. If you are a writer trying to get out there with cutting edge, “announce-able” editions that one address is worth the price of this manual to you.

The **Iceberg Reader** can be approached by writers and small publishers wanting to be included. It's a good, cheap way to get out there.

But what if you want to just make your own and put them on your site, the way you can with eBooks? Then you're in luck, because that has become possible just within the last few months. **eBook App Maker** allows anybody to create native, free-standing iPhone apps. It's licensed software that you operate yourself. The version of independent writers (as opposed to publishers) would run about \$300

to create the first book app, around a hundred dollars for subsequent books. This is very new, but tried and workable.

Even cheaper is the very clever and useful **Knox iPhone App Maker**, which creates the server-kind of app book--a logo on the store or phone that when clicked invokes the book in a template that looks like and fits the format of iPhones or Android phones (two different templates). Better yet, for the tech-shy there is a template that allows the use of WordPress to create the app from blog posts. You add their theme to WordPress and just enter your text (and including graphics, music and even videos) the same as you would upload them to a blog, and it creates the information that will appear on the phone when the user clicks your icon.

As with the entire direction of this worksheet, the idea is this is a means of augmenting the constellation of your author brand, and hanging your books and name in new areas, with the aim of raising awareness of your writing and your name. It's cheap and easy, can be done on your own decision without the approval or time-lag of publishers, and hooks you into a rapidly expanding market on a channel with over eighty million potential readers. And besides, those little icons are just so darned cute and cool.

# Phone App Stores List

- Apple Apps Store** When they say “There's an app for that,” they mean books, too. One of the busiest, “hottest”, most chatted-about sources for reading matter in the world.
- iPhone Applist.com** A smaller app store, showing some books and dictionaries.
- Stanza** The most popular reader app in the App Store. Bad news--has been bought by amazon.com. But very worth getting into.
- Iceberg Reader** This new reader software sells a whole raft of apps, from “Twilight” to “Gossip Girl” and is adding more all the time. Check out the icons.
- Beam It Down** Less a store than a developer or publisher, Beam It Down sells off a variety of sites like **this one** and even **ZDnet downloads**.

# Cutting Edge Resources

**iTunes**

**Apple App Store**

**Kobo Books**

This might be the “**lulu.com of phone apps**”--except that their store features indie authors' work alongside best-sellers by the big houses. Requires an ePub manuscript (easy to produce on Open Writer or other conversion software) and can have your app online for as little as \$29.

**Stanza**

**Creator/Reader**

Stanza is reader **software/creation software/and a store** for smart phones, all in one: a good example of future models in reading and publishing. Having a book on Stanza is a gateway to iPhones...and you can link books on a site to Open in Stanza.

**Virtual Tales**

This is **a regular publisher**...except that in addition to eBook titles, they also sell books as phone apps. You have to be accepted and edited, art created. But if you meet their standards, you're on the phone.

**Knox iPhone**

This is one of the most exciting developments on this whole bleeding edge scene: templates that **allow you to create an app** for iPhone or Android phones from html (essentially a website) or a WordPress blog. The app is not native, but invokes your book on reader's phone from a website. Wholly-owned Software runs \$10 -29.

**eBook App Maker**

This is a very exciting development. It allows independent authors to make your own **iPhone native apps** to place in the Apple Apps Store, just like big developers. Licensed software that runs in the \$200-300 per book range, it's much cheaper than having a developer do it, and compares favorably with other forms of self-publishing a book.

**WD New Media**  
**New Writing Media**

These are “**new media forums**”, and thus almost of necessity new and smallish. But if you want a place to discuss things like this, one good way to do it is to participate in communities, ask questions, help them grow.

**Stanza Forums**

The Stanza forums are excellent on many things, including how to get your books on iphones.

**Semantico**

This blog is here, even though it's a little “geeky” for most writers, because it's a **wire into cutting-edge media**. Worth cruising from time to time, or even subscribing to the RSS feed, just to keep in touch with what might be the Next Big Thing in getting your writing out there.

**Posterous.com**

This **email posting site** is not really a phone app. But it's not exactly *not* one, either. And it's definitely cutting edge ePublishing. You have to fiddle with it figure out what it does, but basically you can just email (or phone) any file in and it becomes available to the appropriate receptor. So your mp3 file becomes an instant podcast, your text file becomes an automatic blog chapter... and your prepared book file becomes smart phone-readable at a click.

# Printed Books

## The Derriere Guard Still Pays

### MENU

- ★ **How it Works**
- ★ **Resources**

It might seem anticlimactic after discussing phone app novels and floating tag clouds, but there is still a role for old-fashioned paper books in this publishing process. And there's a lot of good news: book publishing is more accessible than ever in human history.

### PRINT IS “THE NEW PRINT”?

The historical wonderfulness cited above for contemporary publishing is no exaggeration: you can hold an attractive physical copy of your book in your hand in a couple of days for under twenty dollars and no up-front investment. You can offer that book for sale on the Internet, be a featured author on amazon.com without expense.. It's quite exciting and we're lucky, as writers, to be alive in times where this is possible. There are drawbacks to physical printing, including a daunting trade-off between low investment cost and low unit prices. And it has to be done intelligently and as part of co-ordinated plan to be of much good to you: either immediately as a paying publishing proposition, or later as a potential enticement to publishers. But it's one layer on the cake and good to know about.

## How It Works

There is so much said everywhere about the recent advances in online book publishing, that we will not repeat it all. For those extremely interested in self-publishing books that are many resources in this introductory series of **blog posts**. Some basic tips apply here, as in any discussion of self-publishing books: stay away from “publishing services” that charge upfront, avoid anybody who buys ads looking for authors, get very familiar with the field before jumping into it. There is really NO reason to have to spend money to publish paperbacks these days. **Lulu.com** is a free publishing service simple enough for anybody to use. Anybody serious about online book publishing as a profit business should get to know all about **LightingSource**, who print almost all “POD” books.

But within the context of this workshop, there is a different emphasis on paper books: as part of a larger constellation, and a means to an end. To some people following this “route”, profit from physical books is less important than just having them available, and as one of many purchase options.

There are reason quite apart from sales figures or unit profit to make it a good idea to publish books. And doing them “online” or “POD” is advantageous because it has lo/no investment and increases your Internet visibility. For instance, a book on amazon.com is a big goal of many starry-eyed aspirants to authorhood, while in fact being there isn't the same as selling there. But for anybody using this as one of several rungs in a ladder to a contract, with a fallback position of selling the books, just being on amazon gives you the ability to create an author's page there. It is a part of the

identity you are building. If you have a book on amazon, it is well to stroke it. Make sure you have at least six reviews, preferably good ones. You might be able to get your friends with accounts there to chip in some nice comments by sending them books, or even ebooks. You might encourage fans of your WebLit serial to give you reviews. Foster your author page. Fill in the profile, put up a good picture that looks authorish, add your video if you have one.

Once you have a book with an ISBN number, which all amazon books have, even if it was just purchased from Lulu.com, you can list your book on book sites like authorsden, redroom, and a many others. You start filling pages on Google. Some of these pages are listed in the Resources.

Publication of your book, entering the cover or video in contests, getting a good review; all are an excuse for another round of announcements on websites. You and several thousand others. But the point is you are working at building a readership and a recognition of you as an author or brand.

By this point, you aren't just pushing a book, you are at the center of a connecting web of blog, eBook, book, serial, perhaps podcast. All reinforcing the other towards your twin goals: getting a contract and building a supporting base of fans.

There are many, many scam “self-publishing companies” out there (the very term is an oxymoron) but only a few places that serve your goals of publishing a print book without large outlay and for the purposes stated.

**Lulu.com** and **LightingSource** have been mentioned, and are both unique services that other companies don't approach. There is also **Create Space**, a unique arm of

amazon.com. I don't like getting involved with amazon and have reasons to dislike and distrust CreateSpace, but many swear by it and you need to decide for yourself. There are forums to discuss such matters in the Resources section.

One caution with book publishing; the presence of your book with an ISBN and amazon.com slot is not going to go over big with publishers or agents unless it is scoring very high sales numbers and/or has some sort of buzz building around it. If you have or are writing lots of books and trying to build your brand for future bigtime break-in, this is not a problem. If your book is your lifework darling, then you probably aren't going to move up to the big publisher level: but you will, by using the elements described here, be able to do much better at selling and promoting that title and building your own personal readership.

Being a one-book wonder, by the way, is not the end of the world. Quick, name me another novel by the author of Peter Pan, Catcher In The Rye, Zorro, Ben Hur, the Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy series, or Frankenstein.

So much has been said recently about self-publishing physical books that there is little point in adding to all the clamor. It's hard to get near a writing site these days without seeing tutorials and ads for getting books out into people's hands. So we'll stick to some simple advice here: the main tenor being that there are a lots of ways to get a book out, and it's important to choose the one that fits both your resources and both your long and short-term goals.

The recent advances in the creation and presentation of paper books could easily lead a

writer to a dangerous myopia: the idea that the only way to have a print book for sale is to use POD (or worse, some “self-publishing company” or other scam) and have it sitting on amazon.com waiting for adoring throngs of buyers. In fact, there are other ways to do it and that might be the worst way for you. (Vanity presses are the worst way for pretty much any writer wanting to have a career).

If your motive in publishing is making a profit, Adoro Works has another manual on that and it might be a good idea to consult it. But this manual is about the idea of pursuing publication, with a printed book being one tool towards that end, and a possible goal in itself.

You can go down to Kinko's tomorrow, run your novel off, put a cover on it, staple or comb-bind it and put it up on eBay. Boom, you now have a novel published and available for sale. Not recommended in many cases, but worth keeping in mind as a baseline. And investigating how that would work out financially can be educational for any writer considering publishing. One thing that becomes obvious there are two main ways of printing books: offset presses using ink, and digital machines using copier toner. The latter have made huge strides in recent years, to the point that the quality of many POD books (which are produced that way, essentially on big, fast photocopy machines) is as good as many offset books. And you can actually produce a very good-looking book in a copy shop. But it will be expensive, especially if there is color involved.

BUT, your cost of doing it is the just the cost of the books you get. Do one book, do five, do fifty: they all cost the same. So you can walk in with ten bucks and walk out

with a ten dollar book.

This is the rub: you have to carefully and thoughtfully choose between low investment cost and low unit cost.

The best way I've ever heard that trade-off expressed came from an old printer I used to use for some magazines I was publishing. I was scratching my head over how many to print and he said, "All your copies are going to cost you six cents except the first one. And that first one will cost you four thousand dollars."

And that's how it works: your capital goes into preparing the separations and negatives and press set-up and union pay and everything that goes into preparing for the second that the switch is thrown and the press starts spitting out cheap copies of your publication. So you often see print estimates given as something like, "\$2500 for 5000 copies, \$15 for additional hundreds."

Whereas with digital copies, your first book costs ten bucks (or whatever) and so does the second and tenth and hundredth. Speaking very generally, there is usually a price point (depending on the job, the printer, etc) somewhere between 1000 and 1500 copies, where it makes more sense to go to offset printing. If your need for books--or your budget--is less than that, then you go to digital. And there is no reason to run off 500, when you can do ten and see how they go.

With "POD" you run off one at a time as they sell: that's what "Print On Demand" signifies. Make 'em as you sell 'em. It approaches the whole Japanese "Just In Time" manufacturing philosophy. But the books will be more expensive.

Which means one thing to somebody trying to maximize income of a publishing

project. But something entirely different, perhaps, to you. If you go to Lulu.com or Lightning Source and set up an account for your novel, it's in print. It's available. It's on amazon. You're a published writer. At the low end of the spectrum of prestige, but is that your main goal? That's the question... what's your main goal?

It might be just to have an author's page on amazon.com, which will help you sell your ebook. It might be to offer the occasional reader of your serial the opportunity to buy the book and find out where it's going over a weekend instead of six months. It might be to festoon your website with cover shots. Or more likely to show a full range of sales options. It's hard to tell, but the car dealer's “convertible principle” might apply to this: the idea that people wander into the showroom, ogle the flashy rag-top, then end up buying the station wagon for the five kids they forgot for a few moments while picturing themselves bowling through Hollywood with top down, spilling blondes.

Here's your book, is what it says. On amazon. Click to see full sized cover, read the reviews (another advantage, if you can amass six or more good reviews from your support personnel), paperback price, \$17.95. *Or*, your display is saying, take home the ebook for \$5, the podcast album for \$7.95, the continuing online saga for free, a chapter from the sequel for a buck, etc.

And yes, you and everybody else. But that sort of means “all the more reason to be out there”. And you end up with a marketing/promotional challenge. Which will teach you about all that quicker than trying to flog ebooks. And if you do well, you're telling a publisher of future books that you are not shy or inept about getting out there and selling your work.

You've also learned something about the importance of niches and platforms in a very real way. Maybe enough that your next book won't be a heartfelt exploration of coming of age in Kansas, but something you're starting to see as something you can more easily sell: a novel set at a nearby famous place where tourists come and shop, a story that would appeal to steampunkers or chicklitters or personal watercraft owners or some other group you can reach and market to. Which means that with your next books you'll either be trying to sell something easier to move...or offering a more attractive title to publishers and agents. If you go this route, there is plenty of material out there to help you. A quick first-aid kit I offer:

First--If any publisher advertises for writers...RUN!

Second--Examine this chart. It's no longer a chop-off from “Real publisher” to “Vanity Mill”, it's a spectrum. Figure out the lay of the land *in the perspective of what you want to achieve* before investing time, energy, or--for crying out loud--money.

### **SPECTRUM OF PUBLISHING POSSIBILITIES**

Third--Follow that up by reading through these blog posts. The red subheads are links to sites where experts and experienced users have posted valuable information, including forums where you can ask them questions.

### **SHOULD YOU PUBLISH YOUR OWN PRINT EDITION?**

That should bring you up to speed where the following table of book publishing resources will be helpful to you.

# Print Book Resources

## Lulu.com

This is a unique business that can **produce books on demand** (“POD”) and lets you sell them off their site and your own site. Pros and cons, for which see the discussions in forums listed below.

## Lightning Source Paw Prints

These are firms that actually **produce “POD” books**. All the POD presses out there are just middlemen to LSI (Lightning Source) or—to a much lesser degree—Paw Prints, which runs all the books for Whiskey Creek Press.

## Create Space

Another unique solution with upside and downside: allows **immediate publishing** of a POD book on amazon.com

## ISBN Standards Bowker

For U.S. Publishers, these are the source sites for ISBN numbers. Or call 800-521-8110.

## List of Printers EC Printing

It's easy to find sources and discussions of POD online than actual **ink-based offset printing/binding**. This is a good list of printers. Scan Poynter's list for links to solutions to virtually every book production/editing/distribution/promo task.

EC is a source of printed books--tailored to small publisher needs--and their information pages on self-publishing are an excellent resource.

**Dan Poynter**  
**Foner Books**  
**Aaron Shepard**  
**Leo Boeckl**  
**How To POD**  
**John Kremer**

These sites are information and tutorials by **experts and gurus** of self-publishing. Most have books for sale, but their sites provide extremely comprehensive insight and facts on all aspects of producing and selling your own titles.

If you are thinking of investing your time, money, and prestige in your own books, you owe it to yourself to study these guys.

**POD.net**  
**POD Forums**

POD **“self-publishing companies”** and “vanity presses” are NOT recommended. But if you are curious, these sites provide better information on them that you will get in writing forums. The price tags will hopefully convince you to learn more and ask elsewhere.

**SelfPub Review Forums**  
**AbsoluteWrite**  
**BMN SelfPub Group**  
**Published Authors**  
**PA on Linked In**  
**Lulu.com Forums**  
**POD Forums**

**Discussion forums** for producing print books--everything from printing to total vanity scams can be found here, with comments. Ask your questions, share info, self-promote, get smart.

**Biblio Distribution**  
**Baker & Taylor**  
**IPG**  
**Amazon Advantage**  
**Barnes & Noble**

The weak part in many a self-publisher's business plan is distribution. These are **independent book distributors** you can sign up with to get your book available. The last two are remarkable programs, putting you book online, and even in physical stores...but they take a good cut.

**Podbram**

These are sites that **review self-published books**. Podbram is all about POD books.

**Bauu Lists**

An excellent **compendium of tips and lists** of review sites, press release sites and many more of use to selling independent books.

# New Media Resources

## MENU

- ★ **General**
- ★ **Monetizing**
- ★ **Success Stories**

## OTHER RESOURCES

- ★ **Weblit Resources**
- ★ **eBook Resources**
- ★ **PodCast Resources**
- ★ **Phone App Resources**
- ★ **Print Book Resources**

This list of online resources will be, inevitably in such a fast-breaking area of writing and marketing, incomplete and dated. But it will retain usefulness because the real value is in becoming immersed into the communities you are writing in. Joining the forums and networks ensures that you will be kept apprised of changes and new developments.

Meanwhile, this list should give you a “tool kit” very adequate to get started using New Media and integrating it to your overall posture as a writer.

# General Resources

## Links for *All* of These Elements

### 1000 True Fans

This concept, that all a contemporary independent artist needs is a “Thousand True Fans” is applicable to every step of the process described here and becoming one **cornerstone of new models** of how the relationship between writer and readers, and how to work it.

### Doctorow's Experiment

Another **highly influential concept** affecting the models of publishing described here is illustrated in this totemic article by Cory Doctorow--essentially about publishing in all media at once.

### ISBN Standards

#### Bowker

#### ISSN U.S

#### ISSN Intl.

These **international ID numbers** apply to many forms of books. Bowker is the broker for U..S. Publishers and sells them for around \$99 each or around \$300 in packs of ten, ISSN numbers are similar, but for serials, and are free.

### Lulu.com

Lulu offers **something unique** to writers both print and eBooks: free publishing! Or pay for your own brand and ISBN. Pros and cons, but anybody reading this should be aware of who they are and what they can do.

### CafePress

CafePress produces branded merchandise...but two of their products are books and CD's, so they count as a **book/eBook/AudioBook publisher**.

### WD New Media

### New Writing Media

These are “**new media forums**”, and thus almost of necessity new and smallish. But if you want a place to discuss things like this, one good way to do it is to participate in communities, ask questions, help them grow.

## **Bauu Lists**

An excellent **compendium of tips and lists** of review sites, press release sites and many more of use to selling independent books. Promotional sites for almost any application or platform a writer chooses to publish.

# Monetizing Resources

**PayPal**  
**Google Checkout**  
**Amazon Checkout**  
**2CheckOut**

If you want to buy and sell online, **you will need PayPal**. Buy-buttons, credit card acceptance, collection... a virtually required resource. And free to use. It is almost always best to go the whole route with PayPal: link to bank, do all the Pro things to qualify for unlimited utilization of this incredible tool.

There are other such sites, some of which may charge, some better for collecting in certain areas of the world (for instance, there is a GoogleCheckout.uk and a PayPal.mx). Other than those listed, include: Digital River, NetTeller AlertPay, and BidPay.

**Project Wonderful**

This is a **very special kind of ad model**, best suited to WebLit, but useful for income to anybody using a website, and as an ad medium for anybody. Bid on space, buy and host banner ads.

**AdSense for Publishers**  
**Yahoo APT**      **TextLink**  
**Q Ads**            **Pheedo**

These are **advertising agencies**, essentially, that insert ads into your RSS Feeds and pay per click.

Some, like Yahoo, also put ads on your website or blog.

**ChipIn**

Allows **fund-raising** with a widget that amount paid towards a goal. Fans can contribute to finance publication of a book, then receive copies when your cost is met and you do the book.

**PayLoadz**  
**Trade Bit**

These are very valuable sites--**download stores**. Place the files for your ebook, podcast, or phone app on them, people pay, download the file, and you get a check from PayPal, less a small fee--essentially your own online store.

**Etsy**  
**eBay**  
**Craigslist**

There are lots of “book sell sites”, but these a few fringe ones that most writers don't use, but might serve you best as a “store” for your particular project.

**CafePress**  
**Topatco**  
**Zazzle**  
**LogoWorks**  
**uMadeUp**

This is another way to raise money; by **merchandising** your concept, logo, slogan or identity. These outfits will make, generally with no or nominal upfront costs, T-shirts, mugs, calendars, and other branded merchandise. You can see this as store for fans that generates a cash flow for you--or as a means of producing self-liquidating advertising. “POD” physical merchandise for cold cash.

# Success Stories

## Writers who took it to the top floor

### WebLit Writers

**David Wong**

**John Dies at the End**, a humor/horror serial started as a blog goof, grew to huge popularity and is now **getting star treatment** at St. Martin's press and optioned for a film by the maker of “Bubba Hotep”

**Ryan Span**

His blog novel **Street of Eyes** **caught the eye of a publisher** and both it and its follow-up “Empathy” are doing well in print.

**Cory Cramer**

His **Ottumwa** blog serial achieved what submission and self-publishing couldn't: **a contract** for it and **Symptoms of a Broken Heart**

(Read interviews with all three on the New Writing Media network **interview blog**.)

### PodCasters

**Seth Harwood**

**Jack Wakes Up** better-known examples of a podcast reaching vast audiences and **getting picked-up by a major publisher**. It's instructive to see Harwood's site--a cottage industry.

**JC Hutchins**

**Seventh Son** jumped from podcasts to St. Martin's Press. Another exemplary site showing integration of web, audio, and print.

### ebook Authors

**Boyd Morrison**

NYT **Best-seller, started out on Kindle**.

**MaryJanice Davidson**

Famously went from “trailerpark to NYT best-seller list in zero to sixty”. Her book was **ignored until she published it as an ebook**, where it got picked up by Berkeley and hit the Big List.

**John Oakes & Colin  
Robinson**

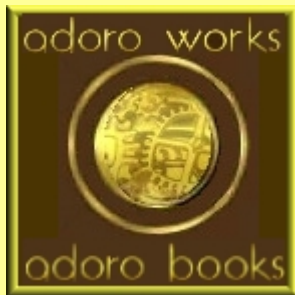
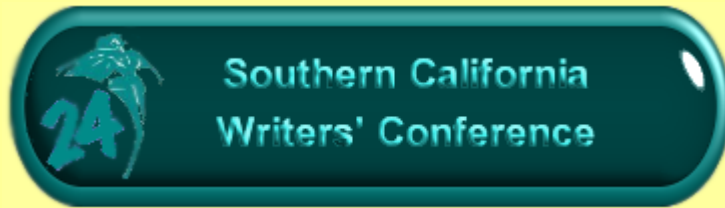
Their book on Sarah Palin, “Going Rogue” was first an ebook only on the site of OR books, their tiny press... then picked up by Harper Collins, a move Huffington Post said might indicate **a new direction in such books towards “ebook first”**.

### **e-Serial Writers**

**Douglas Clegg**

His “Naomi” was the internet's first publisher-sponsored serial, called “the first major work of fiction to originate in cyberspace” by Publishers Weekly. The **e-mailed chapters vaulted sales of the paperback into six figures**. Glegg has now won almost every award in the horror field, and at least one of his novels has been filmed.

# Thanks, Props, and Blame To...



And less graphically:

Michael, Wes and Chrissie at SCWC for enabling me as a Conference Crasher

Online Chicks, for their details and adventures in serials, iPhones, and the like.