

Utilizing Online Media to Build Your Author Platform

Nicole M. Miller ~ April 6, 2013 ~ Faith & Culture Writers Conference ~ Portland, Oregon

⚙️ **ONLINE MEDIA** cannot stand alone for authors: you must have a quality product and supplement your web marketing with business cards, flyers, press releases, events and conferences. (NOTE: go beyond writing conferences - look for special interests groups that relate to your topics. Reach out to readers, not to other writers.)

Rules to live by:

- ⚙️ Focus first on your craft.
- ⚙️ Follow 90/10 rule: spend 90% of time talking about others and 10% promoting yourself/books.

⚙️ **WEBSITE:**

Serves as your "home base" (via Michael Hyatt) - You own and control this corner of cyberspace. All your external marketing and social media profiles should point back to your home base.

Behind the scenes: search engine optimization (SEO) enables the search engines (Google, Bing, Yahoo) to better locate your website content from amongst more than 31 trillion web pages.

What increases your search engine ranking? 1. page authority 2. links 3. page optimization
How do you optimize?

1. use keywords in the page title
2. use keywords in the blog/article headlines
3. use keywords in URL for the page
4. images: use keywords/description in alt text, captions and file name
5. videos: use the keyword "video" in description, put transcription in description for best optimization
6. Google Authorship - <http://www.authormedia.com/how-to-use-google-authorship-to-boost-seo-and-reduce-piracy>
7. sitemaps - see Google Webmaster tools, Bing Webmaster Tools will create one for your site.

Website Tips & Time Savers:

- ⚙️ Evernote.com (organize)
- ⚙️ Google Webmaster Tools
- ⚙️ Google Analytics

⚙️ **BLOGGING:** To blog or not to blog?

If you write nonfiction, yes. Use your blog posts as test chapters and crowdsource your content.

If you write fiction, it depends: Do not be another writer blogging about writing. Share your voice, personal stories or your passion. Be consistent at all costs and tell your readers exactly what they can expect from your blog.

⚙️ **EMAIL MARKETING:**

Collecting email addresses into a database is essential - because you control it.

Mailchimp is a user-friendly system and free up until 2000 subscribers.

Put a "subscribe" button on your website and provide news and valuable information regularly.

Case Studies:

- ⚙️ Jon Acuff (nonfiction)
- ⚙️ Jody Hedlund (fiction)
- ⚙️ Mary DeMuth (both)

⚙️ **SOCIAL MEDIA:** Know your goals (networking? seeking readers?) Define your target audience. Obey terms of service. Be yourself.

Facebook - largest audience and proliferation. Chances are your audience will be here. Use a "page" rather than just your personal profile if you're promoting anything. Social Search = make sure page info is correct.

Twitter - the use of hashtags and real-time chatting is making Twitter more essential for authors. (NOTE: Do not link your Twitter and Facebook accounts. Each has a unique audience and style.)

Google+ - always play nice with Google products - it will help your Google ranking. Must have a Google+ account to establish Google Authorship.

LinkedIn - good to have a profile, but no need to post often. Don't link it to other accounts.

Pinterest - visually oriented, great for content curation. (NOTE: It is more acceptable to feed this account into your Twitter account. Just don't overdo it. Only tweet some of your pins.) Can help with web traffic when you "pin" your own web items. Use creative commons or royalty-free images on your own site to avoid copyright infringement.

NOTE about branding: use the same colors, fonts and images across all your social media profiles, website and marketing materials. This helps with name/brand recognition.

YouTube - good to have a presence, but don't use if you don't have a reason to.

Goodreads - great way to connect with die-hard readers.
<http://www.rachellegardner.com/2012/03/goodreads-8-things-writers-should-know/>

Social Media Time Savers:

- ⚙️ Bufferapp.com
- ⚙️ Bitly.com (URL shortener)
- ⚙️ Hootsuite (Twitter streams)
- ⚙️ Pin It (browser plugin)

Resources:

- ⚙️ SocialMediaExaminer.com
- ⚙️ Authormedia.com
- ⚙️ MichaelHyatt.com
- ⚙️ Copyblogger.com

⚙️ **CONTESTS & SWEEPSTAKES:**

Effective for creating online buzz. But know the rules, laws and terms of service for each platform. Play by the rules. Just because you see another author do it, doesn't mean it is right. (i.e. "Share this post to be entered to win..." not okay.)

<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/facebook-promotions-what-you-need-to-know/>