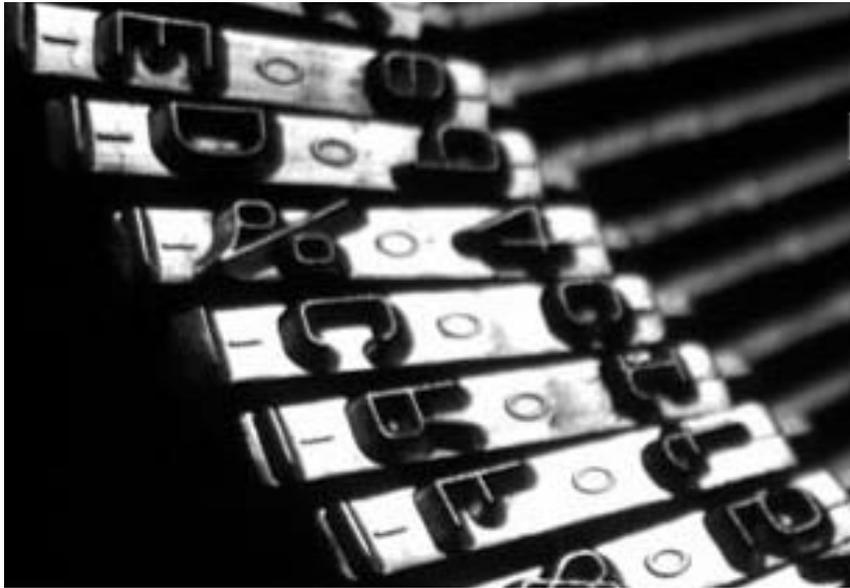




# ARDITH'S NOTEBOOK

THE FREEDOM TO PUBLISH

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Decisions, Decisions

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## Editorial

### Style Sheets: The Editor's Best Friend

Was that centre or center? Ten percent or 10%? When editing a book, keeping track of all of the editorial decisions being made can be a daunting task. This is why editors keep their very own little "cheat sheets."

Style sheets are a record of every editorial decision made during the course of a book. Entries usually found on a style sheet are:

- The dictionary being used, like the Canadian Oxford Dictionary (Second Edition) or Merriam Webster (Tenth Edition).
- The style guide being followed, like Chicago Manual of Style (15th edition) or MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing (3rd)
- How numbers are being treated. For example, are numbers under ten being spelled out? What about when they are being used in calculations?
- How dates will be treated—will it be July 21st, 2007, or 21 July 2007?
- For punctuation will you be using serial commas? Will your em-dashes and ellipses be closed?
- You should also keep a list of decisions that you make when words with variant spellings come up. For example, you should write down whether you choose to use "judgment" or judgement" in your piece, and then stick with your decision.

While it can sometimes feel like keeping a style sheet slows down the editorial process, maintaining an accurate and up-to-date style sheet can go a long way in eliminating confusion for other people working on your book, like proofreaders or designers.

## Marketing

### How to Promote Your Book Online

#### Using Social Media

Social media is a searchable, user-driven tool for sharing and experiencing original and secondary content. The most important aspect of social media, besides it's being both user- and publisher-generated, is how it is organized. Most social media sites use posts, tags, ratings, and comments as the fundamental participatory elements.

#### *Why Should You Use Social Media?*

1. It's free.
2. It has a far reach.
3. It has broad coverage.
4. You can see results in a matter of weeks.
5. You can often target your audience.

#### *The Challenges of Using Social Media*

1. It can be time-consuming at first.
2. Not all social media tools can be used successfully.
3. It usually requires ongoing input and maintenance.

#### *How You Can Use Popular Social Media Sites*

#### Blogging

Blogs remain a very popular channel for receiving and sharing information. They take many forms and are used by a wide variety of content creators.

An increasing number of book reviewers are setting up blogs. Since it is becoming more difficult to get reviews in print, blogs offer an excellent alternative. Book reviewers of all kinds are now blogging. It is becoming more crucial for book publishers to seek out popular bloggers, both independent and as part of major news websites, as an important source for book reviews of all genres.

Blogging can be an important tool for authors as well. You can use it as a way to communicate with readers and the media. Authors can use blogs to discuss issues discussed in their books. Authors with blogs are in a great position to ensure the success of their books, as successful blogs have consistently high traffic. Especially where non-fiction authors are concerned, blogs are becoming increasingly important as a publicity tool. Furthermore, blogs are easily set up to allow readers to purchase books directly though such pro-

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grams as Amazon Associates.

### YouTube

Publishers have a few options when using YouTube for promotion and publicity. Since it is a video-sharing site, it makes sense to have content that takes advantage of both sight and sound.

One way to promote books on YouTube is to post videos of author readings. Many readers enjoy being able to see what writers look like, but cannot always see them read in person. YouTube is a way to get around that. It can also be a way to offer content from books as a way of promoting them. This works especially well with non-fiction instructional titles. Posting lessons or workshops on YouTube will not only offer some good free advice to the World Wide Web, it will entice people to get more from the author by buying the book.

### Facebook

Considered by some to be the epitome of social media, the popularity of Facebook is well known by users and non-users alike. With millions of users worldwide — many of whom reside in Canada — it's difficult to ignore the potential Facebook has in terms of publicity and promotion.

Much of the benefit of Facebook resides in its flexibility. Unlike YouTube, which is driven by images, Facebook has no individual focus for posting content. Content can include photos, videos, links, comments, and status updates.

An important feature on Facebook concerning its use as a tool for promotion is that users are allowed to create groups and fan clubs. Through Facebook groups, a book publisher can build a large list of members. Within the group page, you can post contact information, news, events, and even allow users to begin discussions and post comments.

### Twitter

Twitter is a simple and unique social media tool. It allows users to post "status updates" on a regular basis. This is a tool for keeping users connected through constant communication. You can use it to let people know what's going on with book projects, upcoming releases, industry events, etc. You can also use Twitter to let your readership in on your everyday life, especially when it comes to writing, touring, and just living the life of an author. You'd be surprised at how interested readers are in knowing even the smallest details about authors. This is the beauty of social media.

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## Strategies for Selling Online

### Amazon "Search Inside!" Program

While there are several things publishers can do to boost sales, there are a number of them that are simply services provided by others. Amazon, being one of the largest online retailers in the world, has a program for book publishers that offers advanced features to the books listed on their site. The Search Inside! program is essentially a database of titles that interacts with the Amazon site. It allows users to view the first few pages of a title to give them an idea of what's inside.

### Amazon Associates Program

Amazon has another program that is directly useful for increasing book sales online. The program is

for people who want to direct people from their websites to Amazon to purchase something. This works for anything Amazon sells, but book publishers can take advantage of the program as a selling tool for books. You can post these links and "widgets" virtually anywhere you can post on the Web. In most cases, this means posting them to websites and blog entries.

### Free Samples

A challenge for book publishers is finding a way to encourage the public to make a purchase. Providing free samples of upcoming and already-released titles, book publishers will build demand for the full product. One way to do this is to offer PDF downloads of sample chapters on publisher and author websites.

## Distribution: Reaching book buyers

After years of blood, sweat, and tears, you are holding your finished book in your hands. It looks beautiful and you just know readers are going to love it as much as you do. Now, how do you get it into their hands?

Let's look at distribution.

There are a few ways you can sell your book and each has its pros and cons, mostly to do with the amount of money per book that you get to keep. Whatever distribution method you choose, make sure your book has an ISBN (International Standard Book Number) so that buyers can find it easily.

### 1) Sell it yourself.

This method works particularly well if your book is part of a larger project, such as a series of lectures or workshops. For example, if you've written a book about heritage tomatoes and you travel around to garden clubs giving talks about tomatoes, then often people in the audience will want to buy a copy of your book. Financial advisors, motivational speakers, and experts on all kinds of subjects sell their books this way. It's hard work, but you get to keep all the money, you control the stock, and you present your book directly to your readers. This is where a good website is a valuable selling tool, particularly if you also have a PayPal account for readers to use when buying your book.

### 2) Sell it on consignment at bookstores.

In a way, this is how traditional publishers sell books. The bookstore agrees to display the book for a certain period of time, keeping a percentage of the cost of the book and paying the publisher once the books have sold. If the books don't sell, then they are returned to the publisher, in this case, you. Not all bookstores will agree to sell self-published books this way, but if you have a good relationship with the owners and if you are organized and professional in your

approach, some might give it a try. Make sure your stock is in perfect condition, offer a proper discount to the store—40% is standard—and collect unsold books promptly at the end of the consignment period. Don't sulk if they don't feature your book in a huge window display, and remember to do your part to promote the book by sending buyers to the store.

### 3) Sell it through an independent distributor.

There are some book distribution companies that will take on self-published books for a percentage of the revenue. Do some research online and find ones whose list features books like yours: if you've written a manga graphic novel, check out distributors specializing in graphic novels. Or specialist cookbook distributors. Or small independents. Send them a copy of your book and ask if they would be willing to represent you. Again, be professional when you send stock, and don't forget to ask what you can do to help boost sales. This distribution method won't be suitable if you have a very small print run or are only printing on demand because you need to have enough books available to make it worth the sales reps' efforts.

### 4) Sell it through your self-publishing service provider.

If you've used a self-publishing portal like Ardith, you will have access to distribution services if you choose to use them. Most self-publishing service providers have at least an online store where visitors can buy self-published books and some will also give you advice on promoting and marketing your book. You'll benefit from help with administration and also from being part of an already-established "brand."

Whatever method you choose to sell your book, remember that the more hard work you do to promote it, the better your sales will be.