

{These are the talking points for my e-publishing seminar *My E-publishing Journey from Submissions to Editing to Marketing to Royalties.*}

I'm Laura Breck. In 2009 I've contracted two books with Red Rose Publishing, the first, *Secret Vegas Lives*, was released October 22 in e-book format.

In this seminar, I'll be sharing experiences and suggestions based on my journey, and on what I've heard from other e-authors.

Topics covered today:

1. E-publishers, submissions, and contracts
2. Editing and book cover creation process
3. Marketing an e-book
4. File formats and E-readers
5. RWA and E-pubs

## **E-publishers, submissions, contracts**

### E-publishers

E-book publishers differ greatly.

- e-books only
- e-book THEN paperback\* publishers
- e-book WITH paperback\* publishers

\*brick and mortar stores or they might be Print on Demand (POD)

Choose how you want your book sold, submit to the publisher which meets your criteria.

Publishers and book-piracy - your publisher searches sites for pirated copies

- you'll need to do your own searching as well – a Google Search
- if you find your book ask the pirates to remove them
- then you should notify your publisher
- as a courtesy, post it to your publisher's author loop

Both e-published and printed books on pirated sites, a concern for all authors.

### Submissions

- All lengths of work – from 1,000 to unlimited words.
- Submit electronically
- Publishers' requirements vary, read carefully
  - Most want synopsis and full manuscript, ms they use to start the editing process.

- Quick response, received e-mail - with contract - one week after

## Contract

- 3 years, 11 pages long, can be terminated by either party with written notice
- Sign electronically and send them back, no paper
- E-publishers no advances, but higher percentage of royalties - 40% to 50%
  - percentages are sometimes on websites
- When you send in your contract, ask for:
  - target release date?
  - Manual of Style?
    - buy and memorize
- Join your publisher's Author Loop, veteran authors guide you

## **Editing and book cover creation process**

### Editing Process

- mentioned, publisher used version ms I first submitted
- copy editor e-mails with Track Changes
  - not allowed to accept or reject the Track Changes
  - I make my own changes/additions/deletions using Track Changes, send back
- soon another copy e-mailed with Track Changes from line editor
  - I make my own changes, send back
- publisher sends "Almost Final PDF"
  - one final review
  - enlist my critique partner to read it for small errors
  - I send back a few changes
- publisher sends me copies in multiple formats (discuss those later)

### Book Cover Process

- somewhere in editing process, cover artist sends cover art
- months before, when I signed contract, I completed cover art form with details
  - physical description of hero and heroine
  - setting of the book
  - did I want people on the cover or something else?
  - was asked to look through publisher's website, list a few covers that I liked
- cover artist was great, UK, we made a few changes, had a finalized cover
- when I received final PDF and other versions of book, the cover was page one

## Marketing an E-book

### Marketing to-do list

- best piece of advice I received (and ignored) before I published - set up as many of my marketing tools as possible before I got The Call
- friend whose e-book was scheduled for release three months after she contracted
- would you be ready if this happened to you?

### list of things **to do today**:

- register **domain name** with a site such as GoDaddy.com
- learn to do your own **website** with a WordPress.com type site
- **blog!** Learn - posting and commenting - unpublished authors blogs, or start your own
  - I luckily stumbled upon four other just-contracted authors
  - group blog, share the duties
  - marketing, belong to different RWA chapters
- use **taglines** on blogs to optimize search engines
  - Google search, you'll come up on the first few pages
- social networking sites like **Facebook** and **LinkedIn**
- **Twitter**, post tweets automatically to Facebook and website
- **newsletter** format, match website colors
  - practice sending it to yourself to get the hang of it
- create online **press kit** on your website - many authors have one, copy what they do
- learn to make **video book trailer** – MS Movie Maker
  - purchased royalty free photos
  - found royalty free no-cost music sites
  - once you get book cover, make a trailer announcing release date
  - post on YouTube, your website, your author page at your publisher
- make **banners** for e-mails and advertising online - BannerFans.com
- IconSushi.com to make a **favicon** – tiny picture to left of website's tab on internet
- professional **photo** taken – you won't be meeting your readers right away at book signings, important to project a professional image

### **to do once you're contracted:**

- few months before your release date, build a mailing list
  - start monthly **contest** on your website – something good –post winner's name
- send **newsletter** monthly, announcing contest winner and other news
- Does your **publisher** have monthly **contest**? Sign up for it!

- publisher's contest on your Contest page (below your contest) to draw in more to your contest
- plan **blog tour** – offer a giveaway
  - some authors give away the book they're currently promoting to get their name out there and build a following
  - others think get more sales if they give away a goodie bag instead; that blog commenters more likely to buy immediately if they don't have a chance of winning
  - when you're promoting second and third books, consider giving away your first book
- plan **advertising** budget – ad in RWR, RT, newspapers, online sites, magazines?
- where does your publisher submit your **book** for **review**
  - are there other sites where you can submit
  - but be careful! Do your research! Some sites exist solely to make fun of romance authors.
- be brave, contact famous authors, ask if they'll read your book and give you an **endorsement** – you never know!
- be even braver – live **interviews** – online blogtalk radio, online blogtalk television, traditional radio and traditional tv
  - not comfortable? try Toastmasters

### **You determine how far you go to market yourself**

- order **stuff** –branding, as well as book-specific
  - Vistaprint.com - FREE posters, brochures, business cards, magnets, etc. They make their profit from shipping, and charging for the uploading of pictures, but you still save a lot of money
  - DiscountMugs.com offers pens in small quantities of 100
- invited to do book signings, order **CDs** small quantities Kunaki.com, sign your CD cover
- enter published author **contests**, require bound, printed copies? do not print your own - ask your publisher if they'll print them for you
- camera on your computer, create **Skype** account, post offer to teleconference with book clubs
- where your book available online, sign up for **author promotion opportunities** – benefits for posting their link on your website - Amazon and Barnes & Noble

A great resource for marketing knowledge is MarciaJames.net – Marcia offers her 245+ page file of author promotion options to any writer who requests it. Just email her through the "Contact Me" page on her Web site: [www.MarciaJames.net](http://www.MarciaJames.net)

### **FILE FORMATS AND E-READERS**

- Different publishers offer different formats of downloadable books most popular
  - PDF = Adobe Reader and computer

- LIT = Microsoft Reader
- PDB or PRC = Barnes & Noble eReader (formerly Palm)
- PRC = Mobipocket
- AZW = Kindle
- ZIP = html for web browser
- There are dozens more, and new ones announced regularly.
- Determine which formats your publisher provides, research their uses.
- Some file formats work on multiple readers.
- Keep a cheat sheet handy – your readers WILL ask you.

## **RWA AND E-PUBLISHERS**

- hot topic - Eligible Publishers and Non-Eligible Publishers
  - If you're published through an Eligible
    - you can join RWA's PAN (Published Author Network)
      - you'll get first chance to enter the RITAs
      - ❖ you can be listed on RWA's Author site
  - If you're published by Non Eligible but Non Subsidy/Non Vanity
    - you can enter RITAs at a later date (A RITA entry requires e-published books to be printed and bound - see marketing notes about Lulu.com)
      - ❖ you cannot be listed on RWA's Author site
- RWA National bylaws are changing – slowly, 2009 is the first year they included Non-Eligible published authors in the RITAs – wonderful!
- ❖ some RWA chapters' bylaws restrict Published Authors page to PAN only
  - belong to four chapters, and 3 accept me as a published author, and one doesn't - I'm working on Number 4 ;-}
  - I truly care about all authors, no matter who publishes them. My goal is to see more understanding, more acceptance, and more encouragement amongst RWA authors.
  - Whether we're published in hard cover, paperback, or e-published, our books are our babies, we created them, we held them close for months – or years! – and no matter how we choose to present them to our readers, we are all in this together under one family – the RWA.
- comparison of First Sales in the RWR from November, 2008 through October 2009 – one year of data.
  - First Sales to Eligible publishers accounted for 66 or 38%
  - First Sales to Non-Eligible publishers accounted for 108 or 62%
- result of economy, or new trend?
- pre-published authors consider Non-Eligible e-publishing as a
  - *first step*
  - *foot in the door*
  - *get yourself in print any way you can*

## SUMMARY

Assuming that one day soon, RWA will make all publishers Eligible, (equaling the field) and you are ready to submit to a publisher, you'll want to consider these things:

- Decide if you want Book only, E-pub only, E-pub and print on demand, or E-pub with printed books in brick & mortar stores
- Decide which publishing house(s) you want to submit to, and follow their directions exactly
- After you contract, find out which manual of style they use, buy one and memorize it
- Be nice to your editors, your cover artists, your fellow authors, and publishers - professionalism counts, and it's noticed!
- If you haven't started your marketing strategy yet, do it – quickly – get your plan in place (blog tours, PR, advertising, etc.) set your budget, and network, network, network
- Know your file formats and e-reader types – readers WILL be asking you for advice
- E-publishing offers unique challenges, but affords unlimited marketing opportunities. As unlimited as there are websites and blogs and social networks.
- E-publishing is international - I'm blogging on an Italian romance site in November
- E-publishing is Green - I call myself a Tree Hugger E-Pubber
- With the price of Kindle and E-readers coming down, the convenience and immediacy of e-books makes E-publishing more attractive. Especially to younger generations, who love anything electronic.
- If you publish through an E-publisher or small publisher, join RWA's ESPAN chapter, electronic and small press author's network – it's an online chapter, of course!
- Keep your thoughts positive!
  - By preparing to market your first book, you're subconsciously telling yourself that you will contract with a publisher, and you will succeed as an author!
  - Keep moving forward with your career plans, and it will happen for you!
  - You won't fail if you never stop trying!

Any last questions?

Thank you~