

Author Websites—Why, What, and How

Stan C. Smith – WoW meeting – 4-19-2022

First... making a web site is EASY! It is NOT difficult, and you do NOT have to pay someone to do it for you.

Why every author needs a website (instead of just a social media presence):

If doesn't matter what you write or how you publish...

If you intend to sell (or give away) your books, your two most important online elements are:

1) An author website, and 2) An email newsletter list

- It's all about **CONTROL**.
- You need an online home base that is NOT a social media platform
- Because you need to have **control** over it. You have no control over social media platforms.
- Facebook changes frequently... less exposure all the time (unless you pay)
- Instagram, Twitter, TikTok and all the others are the same way... they could change or go away
- You have to have something that is **yours**. Something **you** control.
- You need a place to send people for information, for products, to subscribe, to get freebies, etc.
- Your website is your **Home Base**

What an Author Website can accomplish:

1. Potential readers can discover you.
2. Potential readers can find information about you.
3. Potential readers can find information about your books.
4. You can provide links to purchase or your books.
5. You can include testimonials and PR related to your stories and books (social proof, such as reviews comments from readers).
6. You can include news and events (new releases, book signings, progress on your stories).
7. A place where people can contact you (develop relationships with your readers).
8. You can link to your social media accounts.
9. You can provide articles and stories too long to put on social media (add a blog to your site).
10. People can sign up for your email newsletter list.

What an Author Website could include:

1. Homepage (the most visited page of your site):

- Yes, you can make it attractive, but more importantly, make it accomplish one or more of your goals (such as a prominent link to your reader magnet, or to sign up for your email list. For me, getting new subscribers is most important because that's how I develop a long-term relationship with readers.

It doesn't just sell them one book... it gives you the chance to sell them **all** your future books!

- Look at **Stan C. Smith's** home page and **Mark Dawson's** home page.

2. **Books Page (or pages)** (probably the second most visited section of your site)

- Keep it simple (include a brief but exciting blurb)
- Include a Call to Action (links to buy the book)
- Reviews
- Possibly a preview (the embedded Kindle preview works well)
- Cover image

3. **Email Subscription Page** (to get signups for your email list)

- Good image of what you are offering (reader magnet) in exchange for readers' email address (usually the book cover).
- That's it... no other links or anything else to distract them from the goal of signing up. Remember, this page is to entice people to subscribe to your list. Keep it simple.
- Don't worry... your email service makes it *easy* to create email opt-in pages!

Reader Magnet Delivery

This is not really a page on your website, it is how you deliver your reader magnet book to the reader. DON'T WORRY! This is easy, too! The best service for this is **Bookfunnel.com**
Easy to set up, inexpensive, and easy for the readers to get their books.

5. **Bio Page or About Page** (contains information about you)

- You'd be surprised how many readers will visit this page
- Basically, just make it fun!

6. **Blog Page**

- Not essential, but it is a great place to put announcements of book releases, upcoming signings, etc.
- IT DOES NOT replace your email newsletter! Your emails are *much more important* because they go directly to your subscribers. But I use mine as a place to post the articles I put in my newsletters, so that readers can go back and read the ones they've missed.
- Your blog posts show up on your Amazon Author Page and your Goodreads Author Page.

How to create an Author Web Site:

Basically, you choose a website creation and hosting service. Some of the most popular:

- Weebly
 - Wordpress
 - Wix
 - Squarespace
- You could start with a FREE site, and then upgrade when you're ready.*

I use **Weebly**, because it is EASY! It also produces awesome-looking sites that work well on mobile devices as well as desktop computers and laptops. It also makes it easy to get your own domain name, and it's easy to get Google's services connected to your account (Gmail, etc.).

After you choose a service, jump in and make your site. It's much easier than you might think!

The sooner you create your author web site and start building your email list, the better! You don't have to have a finished book to do either. And it's not too late if you already have multiple books.