

Every author needs an email list: how to get started and how to turn subscribers into fans

Stan C. Smith – WoW meeting – March 19 and April 2, 2019

Definition:

An email list is a list of email addresses of readers who are interesting in your writing. Other than your books, this list is your most valuable asset as an author.

Why every author needs an Email List (instead of just a social media presence):

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

If you ever intend to sell (or give away) your books, there are TWO online elements you really need to establish: **1) An author website**, and **2) An email list**

- You need an email list that is NOT a social media platform
- Because you need to have control over it
- Facebook changes all the time... less exposure all the time (unless you pay)
- Instagram, Twitter, 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 (your email list)

Why every author needs an email list:

- Sales!
- Reviews
- Recruiting your ARC team (Advance Review Copy team)
- To better understand who your audience is (engage them... which is part of turning subscribers into fans... addressed below)
- It's never too early to start your email list. You do not have to wait until your first book is published. Start building an audience with interesting content, short stories, etc.

How to get started:

- You need an **email service**.
- Many authors prefer MailerLite, because of its cost, simplicity, features, and it is rated among the best for deliverability.
- Free for up to 1,000 subscribers. \$126/year for 1,001-2,500 subscribers.
- Other email services (more expensive or more difficult to use):
 - MailChimp
 - Aweber
 - ConvertKit
- Don't worry... MailerLite is EASY to use! This is NOT something you should fear!

How to get subscribers

- **Reader Magnets** - You are NOT giving your book or story away for free! You are trading for an email address. It is a fair trade.
 - *Examples of Reader Magnets*
 - A Prequel to your series (doesn't have to be long, perhaps only 10,000 words)
 - First-in-series book (a full-length book)
 - Excerpt from your book (first few chapters)
 - Background information or short story on a character

- Maps, diagrams, digital posters (maps are great for fantasy readers)
- **Book Back Matter** (placing a special offer at the end of your ebook, with a link to a *landing page* or *opt-in page*).
- **Multi-author Giveaways** (by far the most effective way to get subscribers) – multiply your reach by teaming up with other authors.
 - There are services that help with this
 - *Bookfunnel* (the best, in my opinion). Bookfunnel provides a way for you to deliver your books (reader magnets and Advanced Reader Copies). It also has an automated service for setting up multi-author giveaways.
 - *Prolific Works* (used to be instaFreebie)
 - *MyBookCave*
 - *StoryOrigin*
 - Start out by joining promos other authors have set up, then start creating your own

How to turn subscribers into fans

- First, decide on a newsletter *frequency* and stick with it (every two weeks works for me)
- Provide subscribers with *value* in every newsletter! Or they will unsubscribe. Do not just try to sell, sell, sell! Focus on something that fascinates you and is related to the content of your books.
- Make your subscribers *look forward* to each newsletter
- *Engage readers*. Make them feel like they are part of your writing efforts (ask them to vote on book cover designs and book titles, conduct surveys to see how and what they like to read, ask for ideas for the next book, etc.)

Conclusion

A brief example of the value of an email list: On Thursday, March 13, I had a temporary promo for *Bridgers 1*, in which this first-in-series book was free in order to get more readers into the series (there are currently four other books in the series, so every new reader could potentially buy the other books). We had done a few paid promos, like *Fussy Librarian* and *Manybooks*, but then Trish mentioned that I should send out a brief email to my subscribers. I did, and 12 hours later, 550 of the subscribers had downloaded *Bridgers 1*. That means the series now has 550 new readers.

Other than my actual books, my email list is my most important asset as an author.