

Why every author should have a web site, what it could include, and how to create one.

Stan C. Smith – WoW meeting – March 5, 2019

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

- You need an online home base that is NOT a social media platform (for the same reason you need an email list that is not based on 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.
- You need a place to send people for information, for products, to subscribe, to get freebies, etc.

What an Author Website should accomplish:

If you ever want to sell or give away your books (or anything else), then your web site's purpose is to **grow your business**.

Two ways a web site helps you grow your business:

1. By increasing sales (or giveaways) of your writing
2. By growing your email list

So everything that would go on your website would directly or indirectly accomplish these two things (yes, it should easy to navigate, should be intertaining, etc., but... all of that has the same goal).

What an Author Website could include:

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

- Yes, it should be attractive, but does it
 1. Sell (or give away) books?
 2. Grow your email list?

I chose #2 as my priority (to join my list)

Why? Because your email list is how you 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 Opt-in Page (to get signups for your email list)

- Good image of what you are offering in exchange for readers' email address (usually the book cover).
- Briefly tell them why this is a good trade
- 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!

4. Thank You Page (what readers see after signing up)

- This is important because it reminds readers to go check their email to get their book
- It's also a good place to link to another special offer (like a discounted book).

Book Delivery

This is not really a page on your website, it is how you deliver this 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 *You could start with a FREE site, and*
- Wix *then upgrade when you're ready.*
- Squarespace

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.