

ESSENTIAL SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SELF-PUBLISHING AUTHORS

EMILY BENET TELLS US WHAT TO EXPECT IN HER SESSION ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA

Emily Benet's first book Shop Girl Diaries began as a weekly blog, and was commissioned as a book and a short film. Her second novel, The Temp, began as a serialised novel on the online platform Wattpad. It racked up a million hits online and led to a two-book deal with HarperCollins. Emily has written on the benefits of using social networks for several publications including Publishing Talk, Writers & Artists, The New Writer and Mslexia.

What will delegates learn from attending your workshop, Essential social media for self-publishing authors?

Delegates will learn how they can use social media creatively and strategically to build the readership they need to establish their brand and sell books.

Why do you think social media is particularly vital for self-publishing authors?

It's relatively easy to self-publish a book, but no one is going to buy it if you don't have an audience in place. To an extent, this is the same for traditionally published authors; the difference is the publisher is giving them their backing and an element of credibility with their brand.



The good news is readers won't care less who publishes you if they have seen for themselves that they like your work or if they feel good after engaging with you. That's why you need to get yourself 'out there' and the easiest, cheapest way of doing that is using social media; either with a blog which showcases your style of writing, an entertaining Facebook page or tweets that reflect your personality!

Nearly everyone is on Twitter and Facebook nowadays. The platforms aren't the problem, it's how we use them. There's always room for creativity and originality. The key, of course, is not to look like you're using them as marketing tools! I think there's an audience out there for every type of writer. You're not trying to get everyone online to follow you; you're trying to find your community and readership within the massive online community.

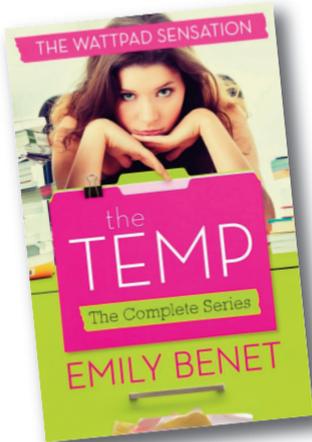
How important are events like The Self-Publishing Conference to budding authors?

Very important! Writing and self-publishing requires so much energy, and these kind of conferences can really give authors a boost. Learning just one new thing or hearing some good advice can give you the motivation to take the next step.

It's good to connect with like-minded people and often these connections continue online, on Twitter or Facebook and keep offering support. We, authors, need to take every opportunity to educate and empower ourselves, and have a more business-like approach to our work.

You're also an author – and a hybrid one at that, given that you have self-published some books and had others traditionally published. What are the main benefits that self-publishing offers you in comparison to traditional publishing?

Control, wonderful control! You might write the book you meant to write, but then a traditional publisher will choose to package it up and give it a book cover that clashes with your idea of yourself, with your identity and values. Often you will go along with it, because you just feel grateful to be published by them. Alternatively you argue your case, and you come across difficult to work with. Whatever the case, it's difficult to sell a product you're not 100% proud of!



With self-publishing, your vision for your book is more likely to be full realised. The other benefit is the profit from sales can be much greater when you're self-publishing, especially with ebooks. Traditional publishers take a high percentage and you still have to work just as hard on your marketing!

Would you self-publish again in the future?

Yes, I'd like to write some new social media-related ebooks. I need to take some time to write up a plan of action!

What's the best piece of advice you would give to anyone thinking about self-publishing?

Work on building your reputation long before you publish your book. Do everything you can to prove you are a good writer, either with a blog, guest blogs, articles in online or print magazines. Think about your readers. Who are they? What can

you do for them? How can you make them feel good? Your readers are the key to whether you succeed or not!

You can contact Emily on <http://emilybenet.blogspot.co.uk>