

SHARING YOUR STORY:

Children's Book Marketing AND Promotion Tips



Introduction — How to Use this Handbook

Congratulations!

Having your book published is an exciting time and a great accomplishment. One of the most common questions the Kids Can Press marketing team receives from authors and illustrators is “What can I do to help promote my book?” Enclosed you will find information on how you can take an active role in the promotion of your book and insightful tips from seasoned Kids Can Press authors and illustrators on how to create an engaging presentation.

By no means does this handbook cover everything when it comes to marketing your book, but you will find useful and practical guidance and information to get you started on this exciting new adventure.

To find out about all of the ways our marketing team will be promoting your book, please review the Creator Kit that you received leading up to the publication of your first book. If you don't have a copy of your Creator Kit, contact our publicist at publicity@kidscan.com.

We hope you find that these idea starters help inspire you to get out there and share your personal story and your new book with the world!

The Marketing Team, Kids Can Press

February 14, 2011



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Getting Started: Self-Marketing Basics

Writing a Professional Biography

Your professional biography is a very important item that you will be sharing with a variety of contacts, including, but not limited to, your publicist, teachers, librarians, event organizers, and even children. A well-written biography is essentially a story about yourself that should resonate with your audience. It should contain a combination of credentials and fun facts that paint a vivid picture of who you are as a person — beyond your role as an author or illustrator.

The first place that your biography will be used is on your Kids Can Press Author/Illustrator Profile page, which is available online on our website. You should also include your biography in your author visit package for schools and bookstores and on your website, twitter account or blog if you choose to pursue these self-marketing endeavours.

Your biography should be approximately 300 words and contain some combination of the following:

- How you got started making children's books
- Where you get your inspiration
- Applicable education background
- Where you live
- Select occupations (past or present)
- Other interests, hobbies, talents or passions

- Previously published books (if applicable)
- Any major awards you have won or been nominated for
- Fun facts about yourself (For example: Mélanie Watt shares some of Scaredy Squirrel's fears, Katie Smith Milway appeared on *The Beachcombers*, Janice Poon designed dresses for real-life princesses)

Always remember to keep your biography current by updating it with each new book.

Author/Illustrator Photo

Hand in hand with your professional biography comes your professional photograph. Your audience wants to see what you look like. Not only that, but people want to know what you look like before you arrive for events such as school visits. This photograph will be used for a variety of purposes, including media kits, the Kids Can Press Author/Illustrator Profile page and as your profile picture on a variety of social media sites. Your photo does not have to be professionally taken, but please take the time to have a “mini photo shoot” with a friend or family member if possible and avoid using vacation photos. Wearing solid colours and a smile always helps!

When choosing or taking a photograph of yourself, it must be:

- high resolution (minimum 300 dots per inch)
- full colour
- a recent headshot (no side profiles)

Some things you want to avoid are:

- Using a photograph that obscures part of your face (for example, a photo of you wearing sunglasses)
- Busy backgrounds that will distract people and draw them from the focus of the image — you!
- Photos with other people in them
- Photos more than five years old — your audience wants to see the “Now You” and not the “Past You”

Kids Can Press Website: Author/Illustrator Profile Page

The first place where your biography and photo will be used is on your Kids Can Press Author/Illustrator Profile page, a useful online tool to help you get started when it comes to self-marketing your books. Your Author/Illustrator Profile includes your biography, a list of awards that you have won or been nominated for, a link to your website (if you have one), a list of your books published by KCP, your author photo and a Q&A.

We'd like to draw your attention to two key features (as shown in the screen grab on the right):

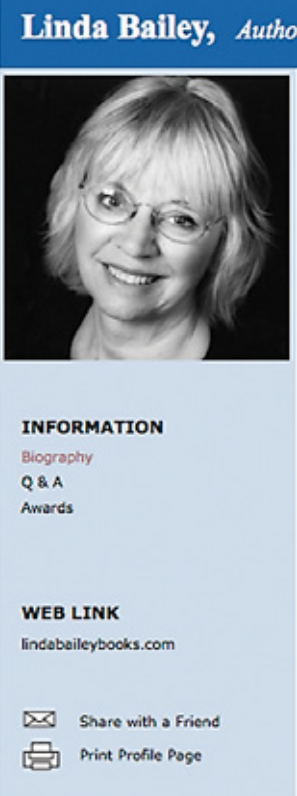
1) Share with a Friend

You can share your online profile with others by choosing "Share with a Friend." This allows you to easily email your profile to teachers, librarians or event organizers.

2) Print Profile Page

This feature creates a printable version of your profile (including making it a PDF) — a perfect handout when you are attending a conference or event.

If you are a KCP author or illustrator and would like to have your profile included on our website, please contact our publicist at publicity@kidscan.com. He/she will provide details on what items we will need from you.



The screenshot shows a profile page for Linda Bailey, an author. At the top, there is a blue header with the name "Linda Bailey, Author" in white. Below the header is a black and white portrait of Linda Bailey, a woman with short blonde hair and glasses, smiling. Underneath the photo is a light blue section with the heading "INFORMATION" in bold. Below this heading are three links: "Biography", "Q & A", and "Awards". Further down is another section with the heading "WEB LINK" in bold, followed by the website address "lindebaileybooks.com". At the bottom of the page are two icons: an envelope icon labeled "Share with a Friend" and a printer icon labeled "Print Profile Page".

Kids Can Press Website: Feature Sheet

Another useful feature on the Kids Can Press website is the “Print Feature Sheet” option (as seen in the screen grab on the bottom). A Feature Sheet can be automatically generated for any book that we publish.

This feature creates a printable sheet to promote an individual book. Like the Author/Illustrator Profile page mentioned above, you can use this document when pitching your book to local media outlets and for local events and school visits.

The Feature Sheet consists of everything one might want to know about a particular title: the title, author and illustrator name, its series, specs, price, format, the page counts, ISBN, what age and grades it’s for, awards won, a description of the book, select reviews, year of publication and curriculum links.

The screenshot displays a 'Print Feature Sheet' for the book 'Binky the Space Cat'. At the top, there is a 'Print' button and a 'Close' button. The page header reads 'kidscanpress.com presents ...'. The book cover for 'Binky the Space Cat' is shown on the left. The main title is 'Binky the Space Cat', written and illustrated by Ashley Spires. It is part of the 'Binky Adventure, A' series. A link for more information is provided: 'For information - including sample spreads, free downloadables and more - go to www.kidscanpress.com/Canada/product.aspx?productid=9891'. The 'Hardcover' price is \$16.95 (ISBN 978-1-55453-309-1) and the 'Paperback' price is \$8.95 (ISBN 978-1-55453-419-7). The book is suitable for Grades 2 to 5 and Ages 7 to 10. It is categorized under 'Language Arts' with a focus on 'Genre, Literature, Understanding graphic novels, humor'. Reading levels are listed as 'Fountas & Pinnell N', 'Grade Level 3', and 'Accelerated Reader 3.3 16'. The book was published in 2009, is 4-color, and is 6 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches with 64 pages. Awards include the Silver Birch Express, Ontario Library Association, shortlist (2011); Comics for Kids Award, Joe Shuster Awards, shortlist (2010); and Mackinack Award, shortlist (2010). Reviews are provided from Kirkus Reviews (July 2009), Booklist (August 2009), Quill & Quire (September 2009), and School Library Journal (November 2009). The Kids Can Press logo is in the bottom left corner.

How to Pitch Yourself Locally

On your behalf, the Kids Can Press marketing team will be pitching and submitting your book to national media, institutional journals and major dailies in both Canada and the United States. We will also submit/pitch your book to special media contacts who would be especially interested in your book's topic. If you have any personal media contacts please share them with our publicist (publicity@kidscan.com), who will be happy to send review copies to your list of contacts. While we have the major dailies and industry publications covered, who better to know about local papers and programs than you? If you have the initiative, it would be well worth your time to contact your local newspapers, newsletters, radio programs, libraries and bookstores.

Remember, if your local publicity efforts are successful, please let our publicist know about any local media appearances or reviews so that we can share the news with our customers, which will often lead to more sales of your book.

Materials

At this point you might be asking yourself "What do I need in terms of material to pitch myself?" All you need is a folder/kit that you can leave with or mail to contacts, which contains the following:

- Author/Illustrator Profile Page
(before printing, make sure that it is updated)
- Book Feature Sheet
(printed from the Kids Can Press website)
- Press Release
(provided by your publicist)
- Copy of your book
- Any promotional items you have created. Be creative!

Who to Talk to

Your Local Library

The most appropriate person to talk to is the Children's Librarian, who will be the person recommending your book to children. Another benefit of talking with the Children's Librarian is that often she/he will be the one organizing events at the library. Take the time to talk with the librarian about not only your book and what types of children will enjoy reading your book, but also about what existing reading programs they have in place and how you could participate in them. Perhaps you could host your very own storytime.

Your Local Bookstore

After your book is published and available in stores, make an appointment to visit your local bookstore, both chain and independent, and introduce yourself to the storeowner or children's section manager as a local author with a new book. Have on hand your folder of material in case they want to know more or would like to pass it on to someone. Offer to sign stock of your book. Often the store will put a sticker on it advertising that it's a signed copy. With just a little time spent you can receive a lot of exposure. You should also ask about what kinds of events and programs they have in place and how you might participate in them.

If you live in a city that has lots of bookstores, such as Toronto or Vancouver, seek out the children's bookstores first. To find out which children's bookstores exist in your area, visit, in Canada, the Canadian Children's Book Centre at <http://www.bookcentre.ca/> or, in the United States, the Association of Booksellers for Children at <http://www.abfc.com/>.

Build an Engaging Presentation

The Importance of a Good Presentation

A good presentation has the ability to fuel word-of-mouth and create a positive buzz around your book(s), leading to more presentations and book sales. A bad presentation also has the ability to fuel word-of-mouth, but in the opposite direction. If you are considering doing presentations, whether it be a school visit, a book reading or a library presentation, you will want to develop a presentation that engages your audience and leaves them wanting to tell everybody about you and your book(s).

If you're unsure about your presentation, come in and give it a test run and we will critique it.

Remember to always keep your publicist in the loop by informing them about upcoming events and visits since, depending on timing (Kids Can Press requires four weeks notice), our publicist will help facilitate the ordering of stock (one of the keys to a good presentation) and can help with promoting the event by putting a notice on our website's event listings (<http://www.kidscanpress.com/Canada/UpcomingEvents.aspx>). Advance notice is key to ensuring that books are on hand at your event. Also, please give any pictures taken to our publicist so she/he can share them with the media.

When to Hold an Event

The only thing to keep in mind when it comes to holding an event is that it must take place after your book is published and is available in stores. For example, if your book's publication date is August 1, aim to do an event no sooner than one to two weeks after August 1. This allows time for books to be ordered and delivered.

How to Sell Books at an Event

You have a few options when it comes to selling books at an event. When having an event, always encourage the host/venue to purchase copies of the book to sell. They can order copies of your book by contacting our distributor, UTP, at 1-800-565-9523. If you are having an event at a venue that is not equipped to sell books, contact a local bookstore to see if they would be interested in selling books for the event. You can also consider selling books yourself by ordering copies through our distributor. One thing to remember is that the process of ordering and delivering of stock takes time — a minimum of four weeks — so we advise that you inform both our publicist and your host as soon as you set a date for your event.

School Visits

School visits offer several benefits for an author or illustrator. They give you an opportunity to experience first-hand how many different children respond to your book. You can get direct feedback from teachers on your books — not only what you've already published, but also on works in progress.

A school visit is a great way to promote your books. Teachers and librarians get a chance to meet with you and get to know your material, and the children love an opportunity to meet a real live author or illustrator.

School visits, if handled correctly, should always include book sales. Schools should be encouraged to buy books by contacting our distributor, UTP, at 1-800-565-9523 at least four weeks prior to your visit. You may also sell books at the school if for some reason the school does not want to purchase books. Please order your books by contacting UTP at the number above and identify yourself as a Kids Can author to receive your author discount. You should allow at least four weeks for your order to be processed and delivered, so order early. While the sales may not be overwhelming, they get books into the hands of fans — educators and students who now “know” you

and can provide a terrific source of word-of-mouth promotion. Teachers do a lot of networking and are likely to spread the word to their colleagues if they have enjoyed the experience.

And last, but not least — you will be paid for your time.

Booking an Event

You may wish to prepare a promotional flyer that outlines your presentation options. However, once a visit has been tentatively booked you will want to send the participating school(s) a complete School Visit packet, similar to the one you created for libraries and bookstores. This will need to be done well enough in advance to allow for the school to properly prepare the students and order books.

A School Visit packet can include:

- Your Author/Illustrator Profile page (printed from the Kids Can Press website)
- A copy of your book(s)
- A school book order form (examples can be found online by searching “Book Order Form” in a search engine)
- Your book(s) Feature Sheet (printed from the Kids Can Press website)
- Testimonials/References
- The nearest airport to home (so school can estimate cost)
- Special diet requests
- An author visit evaluation form
- A prepared “introduction.” This will prevent a teacher who has sat through your presentation from “stealing” your best lines
- A contract (examples can be found online by searching for “School Visit Contract” in a search engine)

For more useful information on school visits, consider becoming a member of CANSCAIP, whose membership includes access to their monograph — *School Presentations: A Guide for Authors and Illustrators*.

Fees & Expenses

Fees can vary depending on your level of experience and publishing history. CANSCAIP (<http://www.canscaip.org/>) can offer some guidelines and you can search other creators' websites to see what they are charging, but ultimately what you charge is completely up to you.

Here are some guidelines:

In Canada

\$200-300 per hour presentation

\$750 per day (3 presentations of 45-60 minutes each)

For conferences and workshops: \$400-\$1000

In the U.S.

\$150 per 45 minutes for classroom visit

\$300 per 45 minutes for school assembly

\$850-\$1200 per day (3 presentations of 45-60 minutes each)

Expenses such as travel, accommodation and meals should be added to the basic fee.

Useful School Booking Services

If you are not sure how to get started when it comes to actually booking schools, you might want to consider some of these services that will help you set up school visits or provide you with information on how to book school visits.



Authors' Booking Services (Canada only)

www.authorsbooking.com/

Valerie Sherrard and Marsha Skrypuch established Authors' Booking Service (ABS) in 2006. ABS allows educators and librarians to easily find children's and young adult authors who are willing to present at schools and libraries. Creators associated with ABS range from emerging to established writers, from award nominees to winners, and from storytellers to illustrators. There is no fee to authors for this service. The only time a fee is required is when a booking is secured. This booking fee is \$25.00 plus HST for each session successfully booked. Authors are invoiced after the booking has taken place.

Membership Information:

To become a member, send an email confirming your interest. Once your application is processed, you'll be advised of ABS's decision. A number of items are considered with each new applicant. Most important is the author's publishing background, especially over the past five years. This includes not only the number of published works but also award nominations/wins. Successful applicants will be advised of their acceptance.

SchoolBookings.com

www.schoolbookings.com/

SchoolBookings.com is a database of authors and illustrators who would like to book signings and presentations at schools. Cost: \$149 per annum. The first month of listing is free.

Author Visits by State

authorbystate.blogspot.com/

Author Visits by State is a blog maintained by children's book author Kim Norman. The blog is a comprehensive state-by-state listing of children's book authors and illustrators who participate in school visits. Creators residing in Canada are also welcome. Cost: There is no charge to be listed.

Presentation Tips from KCP Authors & Illustrators

“I’m so glad you’re not one of those boring authors who just reads from the book.’ I hear that all too often. The days of simply standing up and reading from your book are almost past ...” — Hugh Brewster

As Hugh Brewster, author of *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose* writes, the days are gone when an author or illustrator can just stand up and read from their book. Below are some helpful tips from Kids Can Press authors and illustrators on how to create and execute a successful presentation, whether it be in a classroom, library or bookstore. Remember, you don’t need to be an internationally known bestselling children’s author to be a successful presenter!

Be Enthusiastic. Be Animated. Be Energetic.

*“Be animated or creative when you give your presentation. You don’t have to just read straight from your book. Look up and interact with your audience, stopping to ask questions ...” — Irene Luxbacher, author and illustrator of *Mattoo, Let’s Play!**

*“I think humor is an important component of my speaking. I use cartoons, funny pictures and such to keep my audience listening.”
— Frank Serafini, author and photographer of the Looking Closely series*

*“Mostly, an author should be engaging the children in the audience on an eye-to-eye basis ... Learn to let your eyes roam so that you are making contact with as many eyes as possible.” — Linda Bailey, author of the Stanley series and *Goodnight, Sweet Pig**



Know Your Audience

“Be mindful of the [children’s] age group and the language/tone you’re using with them.” — Willow Dawson, author and illustrator of *Lila and Ecco’s Do-It-Yourself Comics Club*



“When you are faced with an audience of children and adults, address yourself to the children. If the setting is formal, try to make it less formal by inviting children in the group to come forward and sit on the carpet right in front of you.” — Linda Bailey, author of the Stanley series and *Goodnight, Sweet Pig*

“Gage the audience by both age and size to determine if you read your book in its entirety or not.” — Tera Johnson, author of *Berkeley’s Barn Owl Dance*

Be interactive

“Audience participation is really important! We engage kids and try to ask questions about what they see on the page and what they think about the characters during the readings.” — Hilary Leung, illustrator of *Ninja Cowboy Bear Presents the Way of the Ninja*



“Creating an easy take-home project (inspired by your book) to work on with kids is great. It reminds them of the book every time they look at the art they created with you!” — Irene Luxbacher, author of *Mattoo, Let’s Play!*

“Ask kids questions as part of your presentation. To keep a large group engaged, it helps to ask questions to which the answers will be short.”
— Linda Bailey, author of the Stanley series and *Goodnight, Sweet Pig*

“Involve the students throughout the discussion. I pass around a jar with an owl pellet in it as an interesting “gross!” factor.” — Tera Johnson, author of *Berkeley’s Barn Owl Dance*



Be Personal

“Don’t be afraid to tell little stories about what was happening in your own life or what you were thinking of when you created the work. Those little anecdotes are sometimes the most interesting things to learn about you and your creative process and they make people (little and big) feel like they’re a part of your world.” — Willow Dawson, author and illustrator of *Lila and Ecco’s Do-It-Yourself Comics Club*

“Teachers appreciate when authors talk about “the writing process” on author visits ... It helps to get personal about your struggles, failures and triumphs (especially the struggles and failures!) so that the audience is “rooting” for you, and your struggles become theirs.” — Linda Bailey, author of the Stanley series and *Goodnight, Sweet Pig*

Be Multimedia

“... incorporate video, drama, props where you can.” — Katie Smith Milway, author of *One Hen* and *The Good Garden*



Make it Special. Be Memorable.

“I usually do a magic trick. Magic always gets the attention of a young audience. And who doesn’t like magic? It’s quite something to see the transformation from reluctant kids into engaged listeners.” — Andrew Larsen, author of *The Imaginary Garden*

“Whenever possible, I take artifacts to show in schools ... For *Carnation, Lily, Lily Rose* I wear a Victorian tie and waistcoat.” — Hugh Brewster, author of *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose*



Be Early

“Arrive early to set up equipment! I also set up a book table for doing a signing afterwards.” — Hugh Brewster, author of *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose*

“We try to arrive 15-20 minutes early to set everything up — tables, chairs and space to play games in ...” — Hilary Leung, illustrator of *Ninja Cowboy Bear Presents the Way of the Ninja*

Be Your Own Salesman

“Be sure to send a list of books and prices to the schools ahead of time. Unless the teacher sends a form home, none of the children will have money to buy books.” — Hugh Brewster, author of *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose*

Think Before You Sign

“Plan ahead by thinking a bit about what you might like say (or draw) when someone asks you to sign their copy. It’s nice to have a collection of quick thoughts on hand, ready to go, to make each book you sign seem more interesting and personalized.” — Irene Luxbacher, author and illustrator of *Mattoo, Let’s Play!*

Get Experience

“The best practice I had was going into my nephew’s school. They asked me in to talk, but on a volunteer basis. That was a great way for me to try out my speech and to get a reading of how long little ones could sit still and stay engaged.” — Ashley Spires, author and illustrator of *Binky the Space Cat* and *Binky to the Rescue*



Presentation Tips from Librarians and Teachers

Be Yourself

“While you do need to be engaged and engaging, you don’t need to be a showman/woman. Children and teens will respond to your honesty and your authenticity. Share the excitement you have in writing/illustrating, your passion for your characters, your story, your subject.” — Brenda Halliday, former librarian at the Canadian Children’s Book Centre and current Head of Library and Information Services at St. Clement’s School

Share

“Show off your profession. If you are an illustrator, sketch in front of your audience and show them the brainstorming and/or editing stages. Leaving the sketches for the school is a powerful visual memory. If you are a writer, read a pivotal yet brief selection from your work. Hearing an author read their own work can create a powerful and lifelong memory for a student. Showing their own editing process, journals or notes where plot has been crossed out or with spelling mistakes, all of this can be reassuring to a student.” — Sara Spencer, Lower School Librarian, The York School

Connect to the Curriculum

“Many people looking for author and illustrator visits want to have multiple purposes for the visit. If they can do a visit that incorporates “hot button areas” like character education, boys literacy, subject specific things (social studies/science), social justice, etc., then people are more likely to book them.” — Diana Maliszewski, Teacher Librarian, Agnes Macphail P.S. (TDSB)

Communicate

“Communicate with the organizers. Is the presenter a nice person? Are they clear about what they need but flexible to accommodate? I remember talking to Authors Booking Service ... and they’ve said that the first question from many teachers or librarians is about the personality of the speaker. No one wants to work with a prima donna ...” — Diana Maliszewski, Teacher Librarian, Agnes Macphail P.S. (TDSB)

Be Prepared

“Be prepared for tangential questions (right out of the blue), like “Do you have a dog?” — Brenda Halliday, former librarian at the Canadian Children’s Book Centre and current Head of Library and Information Services at St. Clement’s School

Creating an Online Presence

“Marketing on the Internet is not really a choice anymore. It has almost become a necessity in today’s marketplace”
— Noel Peebles, Market Leaders Ebooks

As people exchange fewer business cards and more website addresses, it’s becoming increasingly important for authors and illustrators to have a presence on the Internet. The Internet has become the place to be and be seen and has opened up all types of opportunities for authors wishing to promote themselves and their books. The Internet makes it easy and fast to connect with people, in particular your fans and potential fans. Authors and illustrators now have the capability of reaching a global audience.

Although there are lots of nifty new tools available, from Shelfari to Twitter, it doesn’t mean that you have to do everything. Start off small and choose one or two things that you would like to do online — join Indigo’s Author Community, release your book via Book Crossing — and do it well by remaining active within the community or site.

Before you get started, decide what you want to achieve through your online presence. If you are hoping to build relationships with teachers and librarians, you might want to start by following and commenting on their blogs. If you want to develop a wider network of people who are aware of your books and your efforts to promote those books through signings and other public events, then trying to attract fans to a Facebook page might make sense. If your goal is to connect with other writers, you should certainly take advantage of online writers’ groups, whereas if you are looking to give general consumers more information about yourself and your work, then the author communities of the large online booksellers might be the right place to begin.

What all social media sites share is that they make it easy to talk about books with a much broader audience than ever before. And, as anyone in the publishing industry will tell you, books are sold through word of mouth.

Wherever you decide to focus your online efforts, you will find it is easier to build an audience for yourself if you show that you are interested in what other people are saying and doing. At its best, the internet allows people to engage in conversations, to connect actively with other people who share their passions. When you are online, you will want to share your personal insights and opinions — and you will want to do so in a way that reflects well on you. If you have positive feedback to offer, you will want to give it in a way that is interesting rather than bland. If you have negative feedback to offer, you will want to deliver it in a way that is not offensive to other readers. The balance can be tricky to achieve, and different social media sites have different cultures and different expectations for their participants. So it is a good idea to take the time to learn the culture of the site you are focusing on before you become too vocal a presence there.

It's a good idea to decide how much time you are prepared to spend on social media before you dive in. There is no point in starting a blog if you will only be able to update it every three months. On the other hand, you don't want to make Facebook your full-time job — your career can only suffer if you have no time left to devote to it. As with everything else in life, balance is crucial and planning ahead is helpful.

Below are a few options for you to explore if you are interested in this area of marketing.

Online Communities & Social Media Sites for Book Lovers

Joining and participating in online communities can prove to be an easy and relatively inexpensive way to increase your presence online. Start small. Pick one or two to join and build from there. Remember this will take time. If you decide to create a page as part of an online community, consider how much time it will take to maintain it. You'll want to keep the content on your page fresh and new as a way to encourage your readers/buyers to keep coming back to your page. Never join and then stop updating and participating in the group or organization. These groups are also great places to share any videos or booktrailers you may have for your book.

Indigo's Author Community

General community

<http://www.chapters.indigo.ca/community>

Authors and Artists Program

http://www.chapters.indigo.ca/community-artist-page-main/com_artists_main-artnb.html

Indigo's Author Community provides a place for authors to gain exposure and cultivate a relationship with their audience in an established online community. Members have a wide variety of options to share by posting and creating content on an easy-to-manage page. Cost: Free to join.

The information displayed on a member's page are:

- Biographical information: hometown, list of published works, interests, favorite musician, favorite websites — can be used as a link to an author's Facebook page, blog or other online community.
- A "shelf" with tabs for Music, DVDs, Toys and Books. The author displays the items they have watched, listened to, read or used here. It's a place to share your interests with the audience and make recommendations.

The Author Page is updated with information on:

- Recent activities: lets the audience know if the author has posted new things and whom they have befriended.

- Reviews: lets the audience know what you're reading and what you've thought of the book.
- Posts: keep this fresh, and invite users to take part in the conversation. Also use this as a place to publicize your events and signings.
- Notes: it relays all the information that you and your friends share together.
- Friends and Favorites: keeps the audience and author up to date with your friends' activities. It's also a handy locator to count how many "friends" you have and who they all are.
- Groups: by belonging to book clubs and groups you can increase your profile by adding to the discussion and sharing your love of reading.

Welcome to the Community
More than 275,000 members - join the conversation.

SEARCH THE COMMUNITY
All of Community

MEMBERSHIP
Join & Create a Profile
Sign in
Manage Email & Privacy

FIND AND CONNECT
Browse Lists
Browse Groups & Clubs
Browse Reviews
Browse Posts
Meet Authors & Publishers
Start a Bookclub

GET A RECOMMENDATION
Heather's Picks
Fiction Editor's Lists
Non-Fiction Editor's Lists
Outer Editor's Lists
Toys Editor's Lists
Koor Books Editor's Lists
Teens Editor's Lists
DVD Editor's Lists
Music Editor's Lists

CAN WE HELP?
Community FAQs
Community Help
Community Code of Conduct
Community Terms of Use
Privacy Policy

What's Happening in Community Today

What People are Saying

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26 Questions For Tom Rachman
44 minutes ago
Tom Rachman was born in 1974 in London, but grew up in Vancouver. He studied cinema at the University of Toronto and completed a Master's degree in Journalism at Columbia ...

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47 minutes ago
Born and raised in Toronto, STEVEN HAYWARD currently teaches writing at Colorado College in Colorado Springs. A frequent contributor to Globe and Mail and the ...

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48 minutes ago
SCOTT THORNLEY has had a diverse career, from designing a Award for the Academy of Canadian Television to the logo for and The Little Mermaid. As ...

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- Gives you the ability to create a robust profile to promote yourself, showcase your interests and also the books you've authored, the music you've created or the movies you've participated in.
- Allows you to post information, upload photos, embed video, create polls and write posts with news and information on upcoming events, all the while tying this back to the item pages of the books, music and movies you are discussing.
- Offers your fans the chance to see and browse all of your works in one place.
- Offers exposure to a highly targeted group of Canadians who are pre-disposed to be passionate about books, music and movies.

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- Applying is easy - you will be asked to create an account and to supply the name and contact information of your agent or publisher for verification purposes. You will likely not be personally contacted about your request. We will also ask for the ISBN of a book, DVD or album that you authored or participated in.
- It may take up to 7 days to verify your application. In the meantime, you can continue to build your profile as you see fit.
- Once your application has been verified, we will badge your profile as part of our Authors & Artists Program.
- There is no cost to apply for or be a part of this program.

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How to Start a Bookclub
Fiction Bookclubs
Non-Fiction Bookclubs
Meemp

For Our Members
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Terms of Use
Privacy Policy
Acceptable Use

Author Central at Amazon.com

www.authorcentral.amazon.com

Amazon Author Central is a free service to authors who are already listed in Amazon's extensive catalogue. On the website you will find the author's books, a simple bibliography, blog and customer discussions. Finding the author's books is a snap, and the site can link directly to your personal blog. This site is in its beta phase, so feedback is encouraged. Overall, straightforward and easy to use with less personal information than Indigo. Cost: Free to join.

What will you find on your Author Page?

Bibliography takes front and centre on this site. It is your collection of published books available on Amazon and compiled by book cover, publication date, a rating based on five stars, a link to reviews, and prices.

The Biography is simple, appearing along the right side below a picture of the author. The Blog posts provide the freshest content for the page, and this is made easier by the fact that the author can link their personal blog to this website through an RSS feed.

To join, you must have a book listed in the Amazon catalogue.



The screenshot displays the Amazon Author Central homepage. At the top left is the Amazon logo and 'Author Central' text. A navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Join Now', and 'Help'. On the right, it says 'Hello. Do we know you? Sign in'. The main heading reads 'Promote your books for free with Author Central'. Below this, there are three main sections: 'Reach More Readers' with a sub-heading 'At Author Central, you can share the most up-to-date information about yourself and your works with millions of readers. Learn more.' and a sub-heading 'Add your biography, photos, blog, video, and tour events to the Author Page, your homepage on Amazon.com.'; 'Track Your Sales'; and 'Get Author Help'. To the right is a sign-up form with fields for 'E-mail address' and 'PASSWORD', and buttons for 'Sign in', 'Need help?', and 'Join Now'. Below the main content are three testimonials from authors, each with a small profile picture and a quote.

Shelfari

<http://www.shelfari.com/>

Shelfari is designed to help book lovers create a virtual bookshelf of their favorite titles. By creating a visual representation of what you are reading it will help influence your friends' choices, lets them know what you are reading, have read, and plan to read, and it has a nifty widget that is easy to use. The appeal to an author is that Shelfari is a place to make more online friends, let your audience know what you read and participate in the online conversation about books with other book lovers. Shelfari also gives authors a way to promote their books by creating shelves featuring their books. There is no special area where authors can join, rather you interact the same way as readers do. Shelfari is a free service.

When adding a book to the shelf there are many options to append to your books. Write a review of the book and choose a ranking based on five stars. You can choose read, reading, or plan to read. You will then be prompted to answer questions about your copy: is it on your wish list? do you own it? is it lent away? And you can add any notes on the physical copy: has it been autographed? You can then tag the book, which makes it easier to search for by other members.

You can also learn more about your book by seeing what other members have said about it, and you can add any discussions to the board about your book. Cost: Free.



TeachingBooks.net

<http://www.teachingbooks.net/>

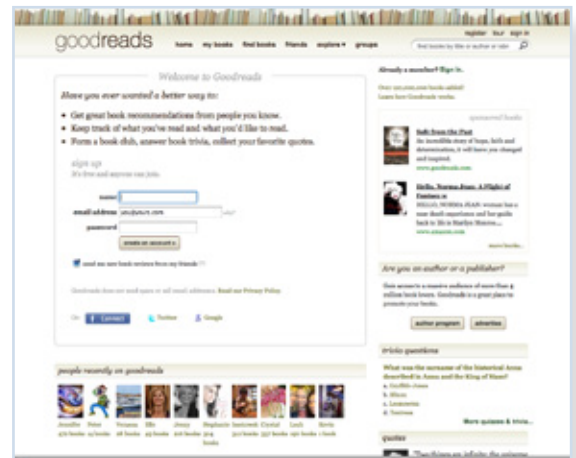
This site offers a comprehensive database of fiction and nonfiction in the K-12 environment with a strong multimedia component that enables users to learn directly from the author and/or illustrator by consolidating all the multimedia of a title into one place for ease of access. Multimedia elements include but are not limited to audio interviews, audio excerpts and book guides. The focus is bringing the author's voice into the teaching environment through things like author interviews that you can view online and audio book readings. Authors can participate in the Author Programs, which provide members with access to written interviews, videos, book guides and book readings. Cost: Free for authors to join, based on their set criteria of standards.



GoodReads.com

<http://www.goodreads.com/>

Billed as the largest social networking site for book readers in the world, it has an interface similar to Facebook that allows users to review books, see what your friends are reading, create profiles, quizzes, and even create status updates. It also boasts a free Author Program with plenty of interactive content to drive fans to your page with events and a blog, among many other things. Cost: Free to join.



Bookcrossing.com

<http://www.bookcrossing.com/>

This is a unique and fun way to get your book to travel. The gist of this is to register your book and leave it somewhere, with the BCID inside and some information as to where to find the website. The website tracks the book whenever a reader discovers it and can show the book travelling across cities, states and even continents finding new readers. Cost: Free. There is a Members Plus option that is available if you spend \$30 in their store. It is also called the Wings Program.



Jacketflap.com

<http://www.jacketflap.com/>

Jacketflap has useful stats and information about the children's publishing industry, and it has a meta-blog reader where you can subscribe to blogs in its directory, which is categorized by writers, editors, publishers, librarians, reviews, illustrators, news and industry. It is a comprehensive resource for the children's book industry.

The authors profile page has a bio, blog, videos, comments, friends, a list of publishers the author has worked with, events, location, a profile picture, and a list of titles. It does not look cluttered and offers quite a lot of information in an easy-to-use and easy-to-find place. Cost: Free.



LibraryThing.com

<http://www.librarything.com/>

LibraryThing is an online service to help people catalog their books. It is slightly reminiscent of Goodreads but is more focused on the books and uses tagging instead of shelving. LibraryThing is a full-powered cataloging application, searching the Library of Congress, all five national Amazon sites, and more than 80 world libraries. You can edit your information, search and sort it, “tag” books with your own subjects, or use the Library of Congress and Dewey systems to organize your collection.

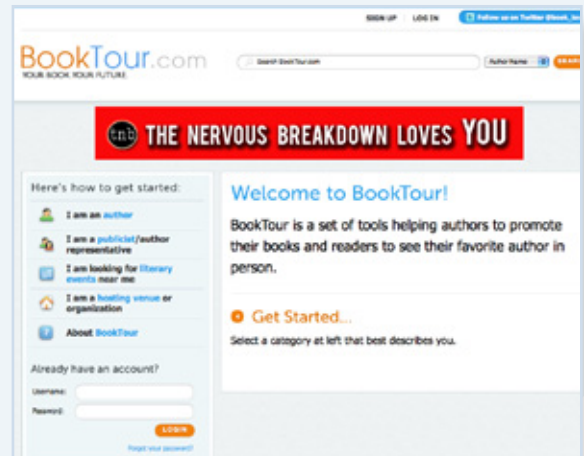
There is also a strong social networking component to this site that allows users to share libraries and make recommendations based on the collective intelligence of the other libraries. Cost: A free account allows you to catalog up to 200 books. A paid account allows you to catalog any number of books. Paid personal accounts cost \$10 for a year or \$25 for a lifetime.



BookTour.com

<http://booktour.com/>

Events in BookTour’s database are sent to online calendars and partner book-friendly sites. Adding your events to BookTour is the quickest way to get them seen by thousands of potential new readers. Cost: Free to join.



Facebook

www.facebook.com

The largest social networking site in the world with over 400 million users. It allows users to find friends, post status updates, create events, join groups, “like” fan pages, play games, and connect with people from all over the world. It has become a common marketing tool for big and small companies who create fan pages to promote their brands.

Fan pages can only be created to represent a real organization, business, celebrity, band or author and may only be created by an official representative of that entity. A fan page can also be created for a fictional character in a book. Pages are intended to be a place for organizations, businesses, celebrities or bands to connect with users who like them. Cost: Free to join.

Twitter

<http://twitter.com/>

Twitter is a social networking and microblogging service that enables its users to send and read messages known as tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the author’s profile page and delivered to the author’s subscribers, who are known as followers. Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of friends or, by default, allow open access. Since late 2009, users can follow lists of authors instead of following individual authors.

So what’s the deal with only 140 characters? The power of Twitter is in its limited space and real-time application. You may not be able to get a whole paragraph out of Twitter, but you can post links to reviews, articles and any other multimedia you are part of. Twitter does much more than inundate your followers with the daily minutiae of your life. When used in a marketing savvy way it keeps you and your followers informed.

The golden rule of Twitter is do not spam. Keep your posts fresh, interactive and engaging. Cost: Free.

Google Alerts

<http://www.google.com/alerts>

Google Alerts are email updates of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc.) based on your choice of query or topic. Every time someone blogs or mentions your book, you'll get a notification about it. You can set these notifications to appear as emails or as items in your RSS feed. Be as specific as possible and play around with the terms on Google first to make sure that you don't get too many unnecessary alerts — use quotation marks if you need to. The book title might work better in cases where the author's name is common and vice versa. Cost: Free.

RSS

<http://www.whatisrss.com/>

RSS (Rich Site Summary) is a format for delivering regularly changing web content. Many news-related sites, weblogs and other online publishers syndicate their content as an RSS Feed to whoever wants it. RSS helps you stay up to date on regularly changing web content.

Benefits and Reasons for using RSS

RSS solves a problem for people who regularly use the web. It allows you to easily stay informed by retrieving the latest content from the sites you are interested in. You save time by not needing to visit each site individually. You ensure your privacy by not needing to join each site's email newsletter.

Using an RSS feed to collate data is an effective way to stay informed with events that are of interest to you. There are a lot of RSS aggregators, so choose one that is best for you. Some of the recommended RSS aggregators are:

Google Reader

reader.google.com

One of the most popular aggregators available and widely used because of its simplicity and easy integration into Gmail. This service allows users to share information as well as auto-updates on your favorite sites.

Bloglines

<http://www.bloglines.com/>

Bloglines is a free online service that helps you subscribe to and manage lots of web information, such as news feeds, weblogs and audio. Bloglines tracks the information you're interested in, retrieves new stuff as it happens and organizes everything for you on your own personal web news page.

Feedly

<http://www.feedly.com/>

Feedly, a Firefox add-on, organizes your favorite sites into a fun, magazine-like start page, and it integrates with Google Reader, Twitter, Delicious, YouTube and Amazon.

Netvibes

<http://www.netvibes.com/en>

Creates a custom homepage with all the information you want, but not for the novice. There's a lot to set up, but it will come in handy, displaying Google calendar, webzines, blogs, weather, online bookmarks, photo galleries, and just about any up-to-date information you choose.

Blogs and Blogging

Excerpt taken from “www.How to Make an Awesome Website.ca: A Guide for Authors and Illustrators” by Naseem Hrab. *Canadian Children’s Books News*, Summer 2008

These days, everyone is talking about blogs and blogging. Blogs can be very powerful marketing tools. They can be used as a way for you to have more personal contact with your readers and fans. You can promote your work as well as the work of your colleagues through them. You can show off that new story or illustration you’re working on or let your readers know when you’ll be doing a signing. You can also show your readers a more personal side of you that they might not ordinarily be privy to. That said, it’s not recommended that you let it all hang out, so to speak, on your blog since there will likely be children as well as adults reading it. The persona you adopt when you meet fans at signings and readings should be the same persona you adopt online. Don’t write anything on your blog that you wouldn’t say out loud to a fan in real life. You can talk about the weather, a great restaurant you went to or that funny thing that happened on the way to the grocery store, but a case of athlete’s foot and the fight you had with your mother last night should remain off the record. If you’ve decided that blogging sounds like a good idea to you, you need to ask yourself whether you have time to update it. For a fan, there’s nothing worse than going to visit an author’s or illustrator’s blog and finding out that the last time she posted was on September 20, 2006. Blogging should be treated like a part-time job — if you can’t think of something interesting to post at least two to three times a week minimum, don’t have one. If you’d like to have a few postings about what’s going on in your life, awards you’ve won and honors you receive as you find out about them, [we] recommend you have a “News” section on your website. That way, you only have to post when you have news to share.

There are numerous websites that will host your blog for free. If you are interested in creating a blog, please visit the following websites for more information:

- Blogger (www.blogger.com)
- Wordpress (wordpress.org)
- Tumblr (www.tumblr.com)

Blogs to Follow

Excerpt taken from “www.How to Make an Awesome Website.ca: A Guide for Authors and Illustrators” by Naseem Hrab. *Canadian Children’s Books News*, Summer 2008

If blogging is not for you [we recommend] that you start reading and subscribing to a few children’s book review blogs. This is a great way to get involved in a community that loves children’s books as much as you do by posting comments on posts, without too much of a time commitment. This way you not only become part of the conversation, but over time you’ll become known within the community as a children’s author and an expert, leading to people seeking you out when they’re looking for comments from a children’s author or a new book to review.

With everyone becoming a blogger, there’s so many blogs to choose from. Here are ten blogs to get you started:

- Suite 101.com (www.suite101.com)
- Kids Bookshelf (www.kidsbookshelf.com)
- A Patchwork of Books (<http://apatchworkofbooks.blogspot.com>)
- 5 Minutes for Books (www.5minutesforbooks.com)
- 7 Impossible Things Before Breakfast (<http://blaine.org/sevenimpossiblethings>)
- The Shelf Elf (<http://shelfelf.wordpress.com>)
- Through the Looking Glass (<http://lookingglassreview.com/books>)
- Fuse #8 (<http://blog.schoollibraryjournal.com/afuse8production>)
- Educating Alice (<http://medinger.wordpress.com>)
- I.N.K.: Interesting Nonfiction for Kids (www.inkrethink.blogspot.com)

Virtual Book Tours

One of the great benefits of publicity moving online is that you can now tour across North America without leaving your sofa. Virtual Book Tours (also referred to as Blog Tours) therefore are becoming more and more common and are an effective way to promote your book online by reaching new potential readers.

Virtual Book Tours (VBT) take the form of one or all of the following:

- A Q&A
- Being a guest blogger
- Contests
- Your book being the featured book on a blog

Here's how a VBT typically works: During a VBT, an author or illustrator visits a specific lineup of blogs or websites. Each day, the author or illustrator visits a different blog. At each stop, the author or illustrator may be interviewed, write a blog post, answer questions or participate in a contest. Typically, a VBT lasts one week, with you stopping at a different blog each day.

Benefits

- Saves time and money (no more taking vacation days for a physical tour)
- Begins a relationship with current and potential readers
- Creates word of mouth
- The material is archived 24/7 for later access for people to view at their leisure

Remember to tell your publicist (publicity@kidscanpress.com) about this since she/he will have contacts for you that you can reach out to and can help with the organizing and promoting of the VBT.

Do I Need My Own Website?

The answer to this question lies in your response to the following questions:

- 1) Do you have time to create and then maintain your website on a regular basis?
- 2) Is this the type of creative outlet and marketing that appeals to you?

If you answered yes to both of these questions, then a website might be something that you should look into creating. Does this mean that you need a website? No. What you do need is an online presence and to continually increase your online visibility. While having your own website will increase your online visibility, this can also be achieved through a variety of other ways including but not limited to participating in online forums, having a blog, a Facebook fan page for yourself or your character, and a Twitter account. If you are interested in creating a website, there are free tools you can use (<http://www.suite101.com/content/how-to-create-an-author-website-a232813>) or you can look into hiring a professional website designer. Here are a few examples of author websites that work well:

<http://www.lindabaileybooks.com/>

<http://www.kyomaclearkids.ca/home.html>

<http://www.ninja-cowboy-bear.com/>

Writers' Guilds and Organizations

Below is a list of writers and illustrators' guilds and organizations in Canada and the United States that you can join to increase your profile as a writer and to make valuable connections for your career.

National

Canadian Children's Book Centre

www.bookcentre.ca/

The Canadian Children's Book Centre is a national, not-for-profit organization. They are devoted to raising awareness of Canadian books for both children and young readers. The TD Canadian Children's Book Week and the TD Grade One Book Giveaway are a couple of the programs designed to introduce young Canadian readers to books and the authors and illustrators that create them. The purpose of the publications *Canadian Children's Book News* and *Best Books for Kids & Teens* is to aid parents, librarians and educators in finding the best book for their readers.

Cost: \$60 per annum.

Canadian Society of Children's Authors, Illustrators and Performers

www.canscaip.org/

The Canadian Society of Children's Authors, Illustrators and Performers (CANSCAIP) is an organization that supports and promotes children's literature.

CANSCAIP is dedicated to defending library programs for children, eradicating censorship in schools and demonstrating the importance of books and performance for children. CANSCAIP uses newsletters, workshops and meetings to promote children's literature to a wide range of individuals, from teachers to authors to publishers.

Cost: \$85 per annum.

The Writers' Union of Canada

www.writersunion.ca

The Writers' Union of Canada is a not-for-profit organization designed to support and advocate for Canada's published authors. The Union not only works to advance the interests of its members, but also to eliminate the myriad of difficulties faced by writers every day. Cost: \$190 per annum (\$185 if paid by cash, cheque or money order). The Union offers a joining fee of \$95 for the first year.

Writers Guild of Canada

www.writersguildofcanada.com/

The Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) is a national association with 2,000 members comprising professional writers working in film, television, radio and multimedia production in Canada. The main focus of the WGC is to negotiate, enforce and administer collective agreements. In addition, the WGC provides assistance with writing contracts, collective agreement compliance, royalty payment and dispute resolution with regards to working conditions, payments and writing credits.

Cost: The initiation fee is \$350 with an annual due of \$150. Members only pay working dues of 2 percent on each writing fee received.

Canadian Authors Association

www.CanAuthors.org/

The Canadian Authors Association (CAA) is Canada's national writing organization. The CAA, a registered National Arts Service Organization, is devoted to developing the writing community in Canada and dedicated to providing assistance to emerging and established writers. Cost: \$157.50 for a one-year membership, \$310 for a two-year membership and \$50 for a one-year student membership.

Provincial

Children's Writers and Illustrators of British Columbia

www.cwill.bc.ca/

The Children's Writers and Illustrators of British Columbia (CWILL BC) is an organization that consists of published writers and illustrators for children. The CWILL BC works to support and promote books by British Columbia authors and illustrators. Presently, CWILL BC has 150 members. Cost: \$40 per annum with a one-time \$15 administration fee.

Federation of BC Writers

<http://bcwriters.com/>

The Federation of BC Writers is a not-for-profit organization established to contribute to writing in the province. The Federation is not limited to simply established or emerging writers, but open to anyone who is interested in its mission. Federation members serve on the WordWorks editorial board, update website pages, organize events and staff booths at literary events throughout the province. Cost: \$65 per annum. Students or seniors may pay \$35, or an amount between \$35 and \$64 that they deem appropriate.

Manitoba Writers' Guild

www.mbwriter.mb.ca/

The Manitoba Writers' Guild (MWG) is an organization that works to promote writing throughout the province of Manitoba. The MWG acts as a support system both professionally and personally to Manitoba area writers. Cost: \$50 per annum.

Saskatchewan Writers' Guild

www.skwriter.com/

The Saskatchewan Writers' Guild (SWG) is a non-profit organization that not only supports writers, but also raises awareness of their work. It's an organization open to all writers interested in the craft of writing. Cost: \$75 per annum. \$55 per annum for full-time students and seniors (60+).

Writers' Guild of Alberta

www.writersguild.ab.ca/

The Writers Guild of Alberta (WGA) provides an avenue for all writers of the province. The WGA helps unite Alberta writers and is the largest provincial writers organization in Canada. They strive to support, defend and advocate writers and writing. Cost: \$60 per annum. \$30 per annum for seniors (60+) or students.

Ottawa Independent Writers

www.oiw.ca/

Ottawa Independent Writers (OIW) is home to a wide range of writers, including but not limited to fiction, poetry and plays. It's a place where writers can not only share but also learn the craft of writing. OIW makes certain that its members are familiar and comfortable with the business of writing, which includes the processes of finding a publisher, editing, cover design, promotion and marketing, networking and keeping track of finances. Members are connected to a network of experts who are willing and able to provide invaluable advice. Cost: \$75 for adults, \$135 for a family, \$50 for seniors (65+) and \$30 for full-time students.

Quebec Writers' Federation

www.qwf.org/

The Quebec Writers' Federation (QWF) works as an arts presenter and professional and community educator. QWF is not only a place for both emerging and professional writers, but also for those who have a passion for writing. One of their many aims is to promote English-language literature within the province. Cost: \$25 per annum.

Writers' Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador

<http://wanl.ca/>

The Writers' Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador (WANL) is a not-for-profit organization established with the primary initiative to support writing in the province. WANL aims to serve the varied needs of writers. They have created a number of programs and services to achieve this aim: public readings, manuscript evaluation services, mentorship programs, literary awards, MetroVerse, professional development workshops, the WORD newsletter and the WANL Weekly. Cost: \$45 per annum. \$25 for students, retirees and unemployed individuals.

Writers' Federation of New Brunswick

www.umce.ca/wfnb/

The Writers' Federation of New Brunswick (WFNB) is a non-profit organization that is home to writers of all disciplines. Currently, the WFNB has nearly 200 members. Among its many objectives, the WFNB is dedicated to promoting the work of New Brunswick writers. In tandem, they aim to build a greater awareness of their writers. Cost: \$40 per annum. \$20 for university students and \$10 for high school students.

Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia

www.writers.ns.ca/

Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia (WFNS) is a not-for-profit organization. At this time, WFNS is 800 members strong. The WFNS aims to promote professional writing, provide assistance, encourage recognition and enhance the literary arts on both a regional and a national scale. In addition, WFNS offers an annual mentorship program through which new writers are paired with published authors to work together for a five-month period. Writers also have the opportunity to participate in the Writers in the Schools Program, where they can speak with children and teachers about writing and publishing. Cost: \$45 per annum. \$20 per annum for students.

American

Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators

www.scbwi.org/

The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) is an organization solely for those who write and illustrate for children and young adults. The SCBWI functions as a network for the exchange of information between a wide variety of individuals who are involved with literature for young people. Currently, the SCBWI is home to more than 22,000 members worldwide, with two Canadian chapters.

Cost: US\$85 for the first year and US\$70 for each renewing year.

The Authors Guild

www.authorsguild.org/

The Authors Guild is an advocate for writers. It continues to implement the necessary steps to ensure effective copyright protection, fair contracts and free expression for its writers. In addition, members of the Authors Guild not only receive legal assistance, but also access to web services. Through the Authors Guild Foundation, all members receive business and legal advice, contract reviews, website services, programs and symposia, and the quarterly bulletin. Note: you must have work published by an American publishing house to be eligible for membership. Cost: US\$90 per annum.

The National Writers Union

www.nwu.org/

The National Writers Union (NWU) is the only labor union that is home to freelance writers in all genres. The NWU works tirelessly to enhance both the economic and working conditions of writers. NWU ensures that its members have access to fair rights and fair compensation. Some of the campaigns that the Union has implemented are copyright defense, legislative efforts and censorship and freedom of expression.

Cost: costs are based on your annual writing income.