

FAST FIVE



An IWSG Gift

Welcome to [**The Insecure Writer's Support Group**](#) Newsletter.

The Insecure Writer's Support Group is a database resource and support group for writers and authors. Weekly guests and tips, monthly blogfest gathering, Facebook groups, and thousands of links – all to benefit writers. We even have our own t-shirt and book!

Thank you for signing up to receive the newsletter. As our gift to you, here are the five best and most popular articles from our website.

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Where to Advertise Your E-Books – Discounted, Free, and Otherwise

Last year, a fellow author ran a discount special on her book. She and her publisher combined efforts and advertised the sale price on several sites. Her sales went through the roof, her book shot to the top of the Amazon charts, and she moved over four thousand copies.

Wow! Was that normal? Would that work on any book?



She was nice enough to send me a list of the sites they'd used and I forwarded it to my publisher. They'd never discounted a book in that manner before, but decided to give it a try. I was to be the guinea pig and they set up a one week sale for my second book, [CassaFire](#).

The result? While I don't yet know how many copies moved, CassaFire did hit the top of several categories on Amazon and was in the top two hundred of all books. Whoa!

As an added bonus, since I have two other titles, both of those rose in ranking as well. And after the sale, all three books continued to sell well.

Does advertising a free or discounted book work? I'd have to say yes!

Between the list she sent me and some research on my own, I was able to compile a list of sites where you can advertise your eBook. A few are free while many cost money. There's often a minimum number of quality reviews required for a listing. You have to decide which book qualifies, which one would best benefit from a sale (and benefit your other books), and what you or your publisher can afford.

While not everyone will experience great results, it's definitely worth checking out!

[BookBub](#)

Probably the most expensive, but it also gets the best results.



[Kindle Books and Tips](#)

Costs \$25 for basic listing.

[Digital Book Today](#)

Free and paid options, and not just for discounted or free books.

[EReader News Today](#)

Costs 25% of sales through their site.



[Read Cheaply](#)

Free listing for discounted books.

Pixel of Ink

List your .99 books [HERE](#) and free books [HERE](#)

[Many Books](#)

Free and paid options



[The Fussy Librarian](#)

Listing for any eBook.

And the following websites list many more discount and free book sites:

[The Kindle Book Review](#)

[Galley Cat](#)

[Training Authors](#)

[The Writer's Guide to E-Publishing](#)

Ready to have a sale now?

Alex J. Cavanaugh

Insecure Writer's Support Group Founder



I have a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and work in web design, graphics, and technical editing. I minored in music and play several instruments, including guitar. A fan of all things science fiction, my interests range from books and movies to music and games. I'm the founder of the Insecure Writer's Support Group and website, and a co-host of the A to Z Challenge from

2011-2015. I'm the author of Amazon Best Sellers CassaStar, CassaFire, CassaStorm, and Dragon of the Stars and I've contributed to numerous anthologies. I live in the Carolinas with my wife.

<http://alexjcavanaugh.com/>

How Not to Spam: An Etiquette Guide for Authors

By the awesome Anne R. Allen!

Most marketers don't tell you the biggest secret about social media:



It should be used for making friends, not direct sales.

Direct selling on social media is spammy. Spam is not friendly. And [vigilante groups can be cruel in enforcing anti-spam rules](#).

So what's the line between "savvy marketing" and spamming? Unfortunately, rules are different for each site:

Facebook

- 1) **Don't link to your blog/site more than a few times a week** or they'll put you in Facebook jail (freeze you out of your page). I learned this the hard way. (But they have no problem with links to your buy pages on Amazon—go figure.)
- 3) **Don't friend too many people in a day**. Yeah, they hound you to "friend" people, but if you friend too many, you'll land in FB jail.
- 4) **Don't post a promotion in a group** without checking rules. Many will kick you out.
- 5) **NEVER post promos on somebody else's page**. It's invading personal space.
- 6) **Never market through a DM**. If you're not friends, it will go in the "other" folder nobody sees. Plus it's guaranteed to annoy.
- 7) **Never add somebody to a group without permission**.

Twitter

- 1) **Don't send those automated DMs that say**, "Now that you've followed, subscribe to my blog, like my Facebook page, buy my book and pick up my dry cleaning, minion! Mwahahah." Creepy.
- 2) **Don't send direct messages unless you have a prior relationship**. Thank for a follow in a @Tweet. Or better, not at all.

3) **Only tweet your book a few times a day (or less)** and never in a @ message.

4) **Don't tweet everybody else's book** just because they ask. Spamming for somebody else is still spam.

Amazon

1) **Don't link to your book in a review.** You can put a title in your signature: "Susie Scrivener, author of *Scribblings*," but without a link.

2) **Don't mention your book in the Amazon Forums.** Better yet, don't go: it's troll habitat.

3) **Link to your blog ONLY in a designated thread** in Kindleboard forums.

Blogs

1) **Never subscribe to a newsletter or blog and hit "reply"** to send the blogger an ad for your book.

2) **Don't link to your buy page from a comment.** I don't mind links to a blog—in fact I find them useful—but some bloggers don't.

3) **Don't pitch your book or blog in a comment** unless it's relevant.

- "I respect your opinion on adverbs, but I've got testimonials from 101 adverbophiles on my blog." is fine.
- "This discussion of Marcel Proust reminds me of my book, *Fangs for the Memories*, a vampi-zombipocolyptic romance, \$3.99 on Smashwords." Not so much.

Forums

1) **Lurk.** Don't speak until you've hung out and learned the rules. Most ban book-pimping.

2) **Beware "share" buttons.** I made the mistake of sending blog links via the "share" button Blogger provides. This sent them to Reddit forums where I got flagged as a spammer.

Goodreads

- 1) Don't join a group to promote your book. Take off your author hat and discuss books you've read, not ones you've written.
- 2) Don't send mass friend requests.
- 3) Don't thank a reviewer or someone who has "shelved" your book. [The new Goodreads author guidelines](#) prohibit it.
- 4) NEVER engage with somebody who's given you a bad review or put you on a hate "shelf." Goodreads reviews are notoriously snarky. We live with it.

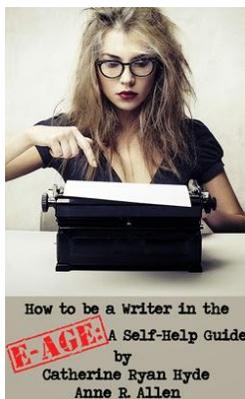
Google+

- 1) Don't post a link on multiple community pages without separate introductions.
- 2) Try to post links with at least 100 words of introduction. They want more content written exclusively for Google+.



What about you, IWSG? Have you ever been criticized or punished for spamming when you didn't realize you'd broken the rules? What kind of spam bothers you the most? What can you add to the list? Can you offer rules for sites I don't know about like Pinterest or Tumblr?

Anne R. Allen is the author of the bestselling *Camilla Randall Mysteries* and comic novels *Food of Love*, *the Gatsby Game*, and *The Lady of the Lakewood Diner*. She collaborated with Catherine Ryan Hyde on a guide for writers, *How to be a Writer in the E-Age: a Self-Help Guide* (new edition due out this month).



[Anne R. Allen's Blog...with Ruth Harris](#) was named one of the 101 Best Websites for Writers by *Writers' Digest* and one of the seven "best resources for writers" by Indies Unlimited. Find Anne on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Google+](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Goodreads](#), or [her Amazon Author Page](#).

Deepen Conflict By Forcing Your Hero To Embrace The Grey of Morality by Angela Ackerman

When we sit down to brainstorm a character, we think about possible qualities, flaws, quirks, habits, likes and dislikes that they might have. Then to dig deeper, we assemble their backstory, plotting out who influenced them, what experiences shaped them (both good and bad) and which emotional wounds pulse beneath the surface. All of these things help us gain a clearer sense of who our characters are, what motivates them, and ultimately, how they will behave in the story.

But how often do we think about a character's morality? Especially when dealing with a hero, it's easy to just make the assumption that he's good and leave it at that. And for the most part, the protagonist is good--that's why he's the star of the show. His moral code dictates which positive traits are the most prominent (attributes like loyalty, kindness, tolerance, being honorable or honest, to name a few) and how these will in turn influence his every action and decision.

In real life, most people want to believe they know right from wrong, and that when push comes to shove, they'll make the correct (moral) choice. People are generally good, and unless you're a sociopath, no one wants to go through life hurting people. Sometimes it can't be avoided, but most try to add, not take away, from their interactions and relationships.

To feel fully fleshed, our characters should mimic real life, meaning they too have strong beliefs, and like us, think their moral code is unshakable. But while it might seem it, morality is not black and white. It exists in the mists of grey.



In the movie *Prisoners*, Hugh Jackman's plays Keller, a law-abiding, respectful man and loving father. But when his daughter is abducted and police are ineffective at questioning the person he believes to be responsible, he is forced into a moral struggle. Keller needs answers, but to obtain them, he must be willing to do things he never believed himself capable of. Finally, to gain his daughter's freedom, he kidnaps the suspect and tortures him repeatedly. In each session, Keller battles with his own humanity, but his belief that this man knows where his daughter is outweighs his disgust for what he must do. It is not only Keller's actions that makes the movie compelling, it is the constant moral war within the grey that glues us to the screen.

Extreme circumstances can cause morals to shift. What would it take for your “moral” hero to make an immoral choice?

Is your character deeply honest? What might push her to lie about something important?

Is your character honorable? What would force him to act dishonorably?

Is your character kind? How could life break her so that she does something maliciously hurtful?

When your hero is forced to enter the grey and question what is right and wrong...this is where delicious and compelling conflict blooms!

YOUR TURN: Have you built in situations that force the hero to evaluate his morality? If not, what can you do within the scope of your story to push him into the grey where he must wrestle with his beliefs? What event might send him to the edge of himself, of who he is, and possibly force him to step across the line dividing right and wrong?

Tools to help you understand your character better:

[The Reverse Backstory Tool](#): Hit all the highlights on your hero’s backstory reel, including his Emotional Wound & The Lie He Believes About Himself

[The Character Target Tool](#): Set the path of your hero’s positive traits, spiraling out from Moral based attributes

[The Character Pyramid Tool](#): Plot your character’s flaws that stem from a Wounding Event & visualize how these flaws present as behaviors & thoughts

(& More tools [HERE](#))



Angela Ackerman is a co-author of the bestselling resource, [The Emotion Thesaurus: a Writer’s Guide to Character Expression](#), as well as the bestselling duo, [The Positive Trait Thesaurus: a Writer’s Guide to Character Attributes](#) and [The Negative Trait Thesaurus: a Writer’s Guide to Character Flaws](#). A proud indie author, her books are sourced by US universities and are used by novelists, screenwriters, editors and psychologists around the world. Angela is also the co-creator of the popular site, *Writers Helping Writers*, which specializes in building [innovative tools](#) for writers that cannot

be found elsewhere.

Utilizing DEEP POV

Deep POV isn't for everyone.

Applied incorrectly IT can create a stream-of-consciousness that will quickly overwhelm the reader.

I'd like to suggest that once you fully understand your character (absolutely vital to your success) *Deep POV* is something to learn slowly and methodically.

Consider this: Your book's finished and you're now in full edit-revision mode. You notice several scenes that fall short. What do you do?

Why not add an emotional depth to those parts without applying *Deep POV* to the entire manuscript?

Example: Your antagonist waits aboard his yacht. He's just discovered that one of his men allowed a witness to flee, and now he could face the death penalty.

Here's the scene in each POV:

1st: When John returned, he found me sitting on the white leather bench. I had my eyes half-closed, my arms crossed, and I was feeling great sadness. "Well?" I asked, but I was thinking, 'Give me a reason not to kill you.'

3rd: Matthew sat on the white leather bench and lowered his eyes. Consumed by a great sadness, he crossed his arms and waited. When John returned, he asked him, "How long have you worked for me?"

Omni: When John returned, he found his boss sitting on the white leather bench with his eyes half-closed and his arms crossed. He chose not to look at John, he was that angry. "Tell me I didn't make a mistake bringing you," he said. John couldn't think and stuttered...

Clearly, a deeper sense of intimacy is missing.

Switch to *DEEP POV*, and ...

The bench reeked of new leather smell and left a bad taste on his tongue. A glimpse east and the sun's glare shot pain through his temple. Closing his eyes helped, but the trembling continued. Blood pounded through crossed arms.

This was John's fault. No respect. No gratitude. Hadn't he and his daughter been taken care of all these years? Ruby held a secure job at the Baja Hotel for the rest of her life if she wanted. John threatened that. Could his stupidity be forgiven without costing the organization everything?

A touch of the gun hidden beneath crossed arms and the chill felt shocking at first, then comforting.

DEEP POV is a scene written through total perception; no tags, no filtered conclusions, just straight cerebral experience between protagonist and reader. There are no subordinate clauses. *As he did something, something or someone else verbed.* Emphasis is never taken off the protagonist. Hence, pronouns are kept to a minimum.

The protagonist is in the very centre of the scene with everything happening outward. Nothing points back to him. We don't see the protagonist outside himself.

It's never *in the morning*; it's *this morning*.

It's never then, it's *now*.

There is no *author*, no character aware of being in a story.

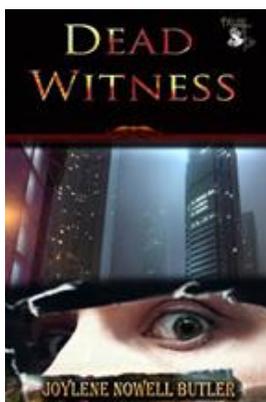
There are no *he thoughts*.

If **Deep POV** sounds appealing, try writing the scene as 1st POV, then switch to 3rd. Drop as many verbs as possible, (*saw, thought, looked, etc*) eliminate the tags: *said, asked* (no need to show the reader what they already know). Do this, and I promise it'll rejuvenate you and your story.

Happy Editing,

--

Joylene Nowell Butler



Joylene Nowell Butler, Metis Canadian, author of *Dead Witness*, *Broken But Not Dead*, and *Breaktime*.

<http://cluculzwriter.blogspot.com/>

<http://joylenenowellbutler.com/>

Book Festivals: A Must Have for Your Book Marketing Toolbox

By [Donna McDine](#)

With all the wonder of technology at our fingertips we are able to accomplish an abundance of work without even meeting people face-to-face. Don't let the cyberspace vortex suck you in 24/7. Before you know it, it's been days since you've had personal contact with others. It's important not to get caught up into the loophole of isolation by keyboard. One of the best ways to put one's self out there amongst is by participating in book festivals.



I implore you to stop screaming and wipe that worried look off your face. You can do this! Believe me, if I can do it you can do it. I'm not a sales person whatsoever and find it much easier to promote fellow authors than I do my own books. You give me a synopsis and bio of an author and I can talk about them endlessly. Me, my books...not so much. Until the day I pulled up my big girl pants and took the plunge into researching book festivals. Like anything in this world, some events are successful in sales, others not so much. It's important to know either way the day is a networking opportunity to connect with fellow authors and yes the READERS we are dying to reach. Connections are essential regardless of the monetary, especially with the event organizers.

Hmmm, I hear you grumbling...

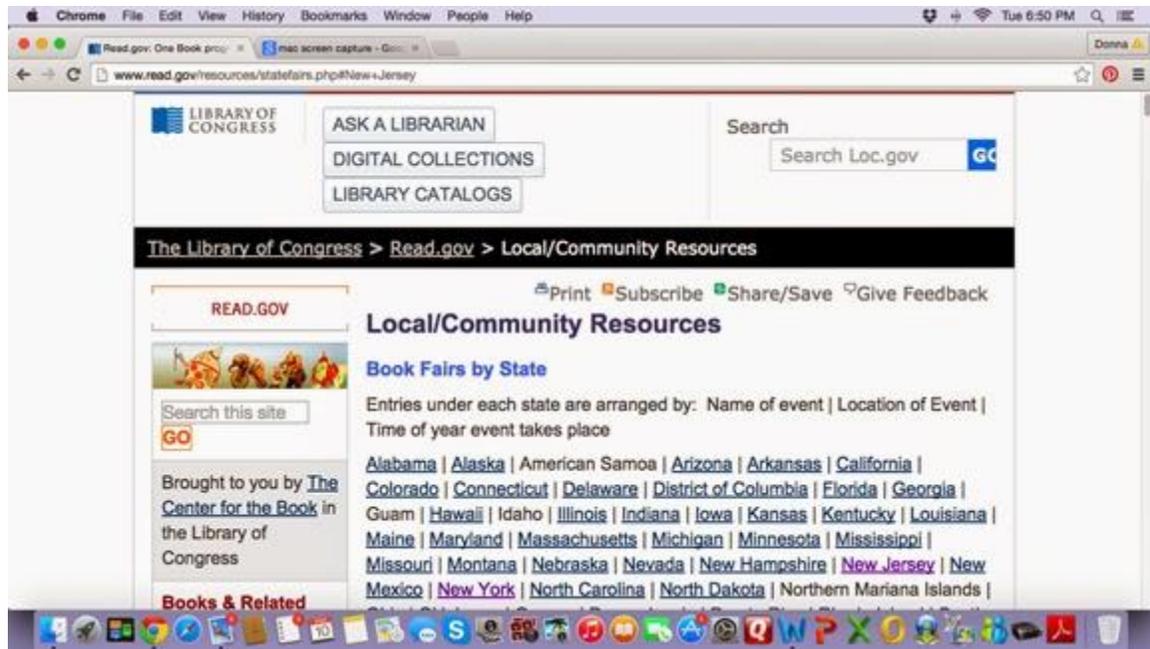
"How do I find out about book festivals?"

"It's too costly!"

Slay your naysayer and get down to research. Yep, even though I've told you to get out from behind technology, this is one of those times where it's imperative to hunker down at your keyboard. For here we go on the roller coaster ride through your region of events via the magic of cyberspace. One of the VERY BEST websites out there for book festival listings is...

[Library of Congress](#)

It's incredible the wealth of information provided!

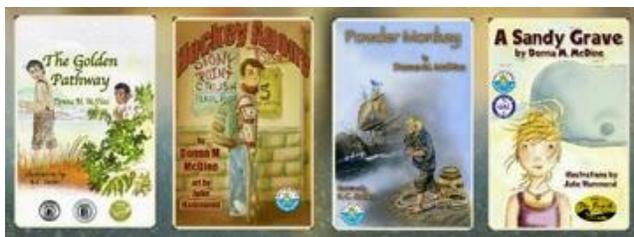


Not to brag, but I want to share with you two of my success stories to hopefully get you out of your comfort zone...

In the fall of 2014 I participated in the Collingswood Book Festival and the 19th Annual Rockland Literacy Extravaganza. Both events targeted a different audience, the Collingswood Book Festival focused on readers and the 19th Annual Rockland Literacy Extravaganza focused on teachers. Connections were made at both... At the Collingswood Book Festival I had the opportunity to meet readers and the 19th Annual Literacy Extravaganza I met over 60 teachers.

To top it off, I submitted my application to be a featured children's author at the 2015 Collingswood Book Festival and YIPPEE I was accepted!

I dare you, put yourself out there....you never know what new friends and connections you may make!



Multi award-winning children's author, Donna McDine's has four early reader children's picture books to her credit and a fifth book in the publishing pipeline with Guardian Angel Publishing. McDine is a member of the SCBWI.

Visit McDine... [Website](#) - [Blog](#)

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A database resource and support group for writers and authors. Weekly guests and tips, monthly blogfest gathering, Facebook groups, and thousands of links – all to benefit writers. We even have our own t-shirt and book!

IWSG - <http://www.insecurewriterssupportgroup.com/>

IWSG Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/IWSG13/>

IWSG Critique Circle - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/IWSGCC/>

IWSG Guide to Publishing and Beyond - FREE! -

<http://www.insecurewriterssupportgroup.com/p/iwsg-guide-to-publishing-and-beyond.html>

IWSG T-shirt - <http://www.neatoshop.com/product/IWSG>

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