

Author Considerations Beyond Just Writing

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4. Options Beyond Usual Publishing

Often when new writers think about “publishing,” they immediately picture a published book. But there are so many different publishing possibilities. In fact, you can take an item you’ve published in one format and, with some adjustments, publish it in other formats for which you can also earn money or at least get noticed as an author. This is known as “re-purposing.” Here are some possibilities:

If you’ve published a traditional kind of book (paper format), consider re-publishing it as an e-book or an audiobook. You could even re-publish in a different size, or with different kinds of illustrations, or even as a workbook.
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Re-purpose articles from your website, blog posts, and your email newsletter posts. Bring similar articles together as a book, or use them as podcast topics, newspaper columns, workshop topics, etc.
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When you post interesting social media tweets or take part in interesting conversations/ comments, start filing them under different topics, and use them later for articles, blog posts, story ideas, and so on.

Have you led courses and workshops, whether in-person or online? Use your notes for future blog posts, articles, and podcasts. If you have video or photos of your workshops, post clips from them on your website in order to gain other workshop opportunities.

Can your stories and/or nonfiction (whether short-length or book-length) possibly be turned into documentaries or other film formats? Stories can be turned into skits for youth groups, local theatre productions, short films, and other dramatic writing.
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Think about advice or teaching you've provided to other writers, students—or even clients in your other business/employment. What skills and/or knowledge do you have expertise in? What about hobbies? Can you turn it into written material? Perhaps you can create curriculum or write articles for business magazines or websites, or write guest blog posts, or even create your own website.

Look through worksheets, pamphlets, reports, white papers, booklets, business plans, school assignments, curriculum, and other written products you've created. How can you recreate and repurpose them? Copywriting, article writing, short stories and poetry in anthologies, newspaper columns, and blog posts are all easy and quick ways you can earn money on the side and/or gain reputation as a writer, while you work toward your larger writing goals.

Have you written or told stories for your children about your family history? Those anecdotes can become key information for memoir writing. Bedtime stories you've made up for your kids are potential children's books. Poems you've written can become lyrics for songs—whether you create the music yourself, or partner with someone who creates music.

Have you answered questions in emails or on sites like Quora? Did people find them helpful? Re-use them on your blog/website, for magazine articles, for basic information for workshops, and so on.

Putting your notes into practice:

Set up a filing system on your computer (or in a folder, if you prefer) and start filing—under appropriate topics—blog posts, social media comments, notes for workshops you've led, stories and poetry (whether previously published or not), questions you've answered, advice you've given, and written products you've created in the past. For each one, jot down at least 2 or 3 ways you can re-use or re-purpose it. You don't need to start from scratch every time you write!

Don't forget to place this exercise in your binder or Duotang.