

A introduction to social media marketing for writers.

by JL Flannery



Contents

Introduction	3
Chapter One: Who is your ideal reader?	4
Chapter Two: Which social media platform is best for you?	5
Chapter Three: So you've decided which social media platform to use. What now?	7
Chapter Four: 5 easy post ideas to get you started	9
Conclusion	10

INTRODUCTION

Hi, I'm Jen Flannery.

I'm an indie author who enjoys writing fiction with a hint of the macabre. *References

I've had several short stories published in a range of publications such as Cosmic Horror Monthly, as well as writing non-fiction articles for Medium.

I'm also a university lecturer in 'Content Creation and Marketing' so I know how important it is to use social media to build an author brand, promote your writing and ultimately make sales!

You might be thinking, 'what's the point? Isn't social media distracting from my real work of writing my own books?' Well there are reportedly 4 million new books published every year.* How are you going to attract and engage an audience to buy those books if you don't have a social media strategy to connect with them?

Don't worry, if you don't know where to start -I'm here to help you to do just that!

In this brief introduction to using social media you will:

- learn the main advantages of each social media platform,
- Learn which social media platform is best for your audience and how best to engage with them,
- Learn 10 easy content ideas of what to post when you're out of inspiration.

- Errera, P. by R. (2023) How many books are published each year? [2023 statistics], Toner Buzz. Available at: <https://www.tonerbuzz.com/blog/how-many-books-are-published-each-year/#:~:text=Figures%20orange%20from%20500%2C000%20to,book%20titles%20published%20each%20year.> (Accessed: 30 September 2024).



Who is your ideal reader?

The biggest mistake authors make when starting a social media account is thinking about themselves and not their readers. If your account is only focusing on you as a writer then you will attract other writers. This is great for building a writing community but its not the same as attracting readers you want to buy your books

No matter which social media platform you choose its important to think about who your ideal reader is.

What age and gender are they? What other authors do they enjoy reading? What content in your books would appeal to them? Maybe its the theme or particular characteristics of your protagonist. Or perhaps they are looking for that exciting thriller to take away on their next beach holiday.

What can you offer your followers that they can't get from other writers online?

To be effective social media posts must do one of the following things:

- **educate** - if you're an historical fiction writer or a non fiction writer is there something interesting that you can tell your audience about that they might not already know?

One of my most popular posts on tiktok (that still gets new likes on a daily basis) is a slideshow of photographs of real life mobwives from the 1920s.

- **Connect with people's emotions** - there are universal truths that everyone can connect with.

So someone who is a romance writer might want to post something sympathetic about how painful breakups can be or the excitement of meeting your soulmate.

- **Offer a new perspective** - this doesn't just have to be a controversial opinion (although these often work well). It can be anything that gets your audience interested or makes them think.
- **Shows life behind the scenes** - readers are also interested in you! You don't have to appear in your content but readers enjoy seeing 'a day in the life' of an author as its not something that everyone chooses as a life path.
- You are one of the lucky few!



Which social media platform is best for you?



Each social media platform has pros and cons to using them and they appeal to a particular type of audience. Choose your platform according to your ideal reader. There are other social media platforms but for this we will be looking at the most popular ones: instagram, tiktok, facebook and youtube.

INSTAGRAM

AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHIC

As of 2024 -

85% of users are under the age of 45.
51.8% male 48.2% female
49% have a university degree

Top 5 hashtags of 2024

1. #pets (100M)
2. #diy (92.6M)
3. #gaming (70.5M)
4. #cooking (66.1M)
5. #petsofinstagram (61.6M)

*data from hootsuite

AVAILABLE FEATURES

Good for photos, short form videos as 'reels'. Can be shared to stories (videos that last 24 hours before disappearing)



'LIVE' videos - great for Q&A and book launch events.

Built in 'Instagram shop.'
Viewers can 'like' 'comment' and 'share' your posts with others

TIKTOK

AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHIC

As of 2024 -

42% of users are between ages 18 and 24.
32% of users are between ages 25-34.
57% female 43% male.

29% of TikTok users open the app every day

Tutorials are the most popular type of content

*data from hootsuite

Available features

Good for short form videos and 'LIVE' videos.

Has a built in video editor that is easy to use and allows a lot more freedom and creativity than the editor on Instagram and has a library of music tracks and sounds to add.



CHAPTER TWO

Also has a slideshow feature for photos.

Can share to stories (videos that last 24 hours before disappearing)

Viewers can 'like' 'comment' 'repost' and respond to your post by 'stitching' your video with theirs.

They can also use your 'voiceover' on their own content if you save it as a 'sound.'

They can also share your posts with others and to other social media channels.

Built in 'tiktok shop.' *30% of daily users have bought an item from the tiktok shop.

*data from sprout social

FACEBOOK



AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHIC

As of 2024 -

49% of users are between the ages of 25 and 44.

56.8% male, 43.2% female

Facebook's paid for ad reach is 1.98 billion people.

Only 33% of teenagers have an active Facebook account.

*data from hootsuite and statista



Available features

Good for setting up in person events and connecting with local audiences.

Good for posts with text as well as sharing photos. Does also have the option to add video and Facebook 'LIVE' videos.

Can be shared to stories (videos that last 24 hours before disappearing)

Can have Facebook business page alongside own personal page (good for keeping the two lives separate if you don't want your nan commenting on your latest photo!)

Viewers can 'like' 'comment' 'repost' and 'share' your posts with others.

YOUTUBE



AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHIC

As of 2024 -

21% of users are between the ages 25 and 34. 17.5% are between 34-44. 12.5% are between 45-54.

54.3% male, 45.7% female.

*data from hootsuite and statista

Available features

Good for long form videos and tutorials.

'LIVE' videos - great for Q&A and book launch events.

So you've decided which social media platform to use. What now?

Build Your Personal Brand

A reader of romantasy probably doesn't want to see a slideshow of photos of you taking out the bins. But maybe (and we're stretching a little here) someone who is interested in reading your articles about how to live a more sustainable life, would.

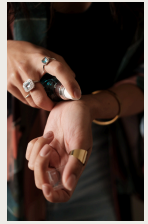
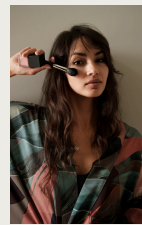
What aspects of your lifestyle would interest your potential readers?

Be consistent

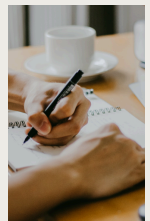
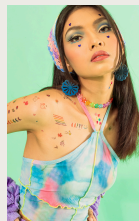
No one is going to be interested in following someone who rarely posts. Lots of advice suggests posting at least once a day (sometimes 3 times a day!) but as long as you post pretty regularly (a few times a week) and around the same time of day, you should begin to build a following.

On that note, make sure your style is always consistent too. Try to use the same colours, fonts and 'look' to your posts to add consistency to your posts.

→
**CONSISTENCY
CREATES A
STRONG
BRAND
IMPRESSION**



INCONSISTENT CONTENT



CHAPTER TWO

Tailoring Your Posts To Your Ideal Reader

Don't forget you're not posting for you, you're posting for your ideal audience. A video that is too long on tiktok is unlikely to do well, as that particular audience tends to watch shorter content. Think about what your audience wants to see.

Once you start posting, play around and see what works. Most social media pages can give you analytics so you can see which types of posts are popular and who is watching them.

Don't forget to use appropriate hashtags so that your audience (and the algorithm) can find you.

Make it easy on yourself

You don't have to make your posts complicated with lots of video editing and I'll be sharing a few easy ideas in the next chapter.

Plenty of people post videos of them just talking whilst sat in their car (not while driving!) or drinking a cup of coffee, and there are templates on apps such as capcut that will edit your video clips or photos for you. They'll even add suggested music to give you more time to spend writing.

Use trends

Every now and then, a trend will go viral. The algorithm of social media promotes trends. Replicating trends is a way of getting more viewers of your content...

But...don't forget to be yourself!

Being authentic is the best way to connect with an audience. Don't feel you have to jump on the next viral dance trend if that's not what feels comfortable. Your authentic self is your best content!



5 easy post ideas to get you started

1) Write with me

The next time you're writing or editing, set up your camera and take some video footage of your doing it. Bonus points if its in a coffee shop or at your desk.

Add a voiceover explaining what you're working on.

Remember you can also take still images from your footage if you want to use them on other platforms like Instagram.

4) An emotive slideshow

Social media posts that talk directly to an audience are often popular and you don't have to appear in your videos or photos.

Start with a photo and slogan that talks directly to your reader.

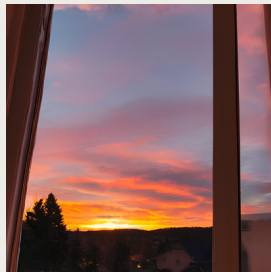
e.g. 'This post found you because you're having a bad day.'

On the second slide have a quote from your book or a short poem that relates to the theme.

2) Unboxing a package

This can be anything, ranging from proofs of your book, someone else's book or just an item you've been waiting for.

Audience's love feeling that they're seeing something from 'behind the scenes.'



5) Posts of nature. E.g. Sunset, sunrise, rain on a window, clouds on blue sky

Social media posts appeal to the senses. You're looking for a striking image to catch people's attention.

3) Interesting facts/ research or inspiration behind your book.

This works for everyone no matter what genre you write in.

This is one of the BEST ways to find new readers that might actually buy your work as it focuses on the content of your book, rather than being focused on the process of writing.

Anything that educates others or tells them something new about something they are already interested in, is appealing to an audience.

6) Any content with your pet in it!

Social media audiences love animals!

If your cat insists on sitting on your laptop while trying to write or you love taking your dog for a walk, use it as an opportunity to get some footage or photos to share on your social media channels.

This will work on all platforms – animal lovers are everywhere!



CONCLUSION

One last tip...

The best way to learn how to use social media is to just start!

Once you start making and posting content you'll soon see which types of content your audience responds to. Most social media channels give you analytics that can teach you more about where your audience lives, their ages and gender as well as which posts are most successful.

BUT REMEMBER creating should be fun! It shouldn't be so time consuming that it detracts from the all important job of writing. If it does then you need to rethink your content.

Sales through social media channels are not always guaranteed, but making other people aware of who you are and what you do is the first step to attracting potential readers.

If you want to learn more...

Sign up for my newsletter at JLFlannery.com to get the latest news about writing, as well as information about more in depth courses including time-saving social hacks to make your social media accounts even more effective.

And don't forget to add me and say hello on social media channels. I always love connecting with other writers!

@JLFlannery on Instagram

@JLFlannerywriter on Tiktok



- JEN FLANNERY