

17 Simple Steps to Build a Fiction Platform

By Jill Kemerer

We have so many fantastic, free media sites to help us with our networking, but we don't always understand how to use them. Fear and ignorance hold us back. And I can only speak for myself, but I was overly cautious. I wanted to build a platform but didn't understand the fundamental mindset behind one.



Photo by greggoconell

If you're unsure where to start or how to grow a web presence, I'd like to help.

With that in mind, here are 17 simple ways to build a fiction platform:

1. Decide on your author name. Real name or pen name? **Your author name is the foundation of your fiction platform.**
2. Get a good head shot of yourself smiling. Use this picture on all social media sites.
3. Fill out a Blogger profile under your author name even if you don't have a blog. **Include an e-mail address.** Create a new e-mail address if necessary, but include one. Upload your fab picture in your profile. Why do this? Many blogs are hosted by Blogger. When you leave comments, you want your pen name and your picture to be associated with your comments. Also, if the blog host or someone else wants to contact you, they can e-mail you.
4. Start reading author and agent blogs:
 - a. Leave comments on blogs (use your author name--an anonymous comment won't help you)
 - b. Read the other comments--there's a wealth of info in them
 - c. Click on the commenters you enjoy and check if they have a blog
 - d. Read the blogs of commenters you enjoy
 - e. Go ahead and follow blogs either through Google Friend Connect or by clicking on

the RSS feed.

5. Purchase a domain name with your author name. Ex: <http://www.jillkemerer.com/>

6. Brainstorm topics you consider your strengths. If you decide to start a blog, this will help you narrow down what to focus your posts on.

7. If you decide to blog, weigh the benefits of using Wordpress or Blogger. Go to blogs using these services, do an Internet search of Wordpress vs. Blogger, or ask bloggers their opinion. We all like to share opinions.

8. Create a Facebook page under your author name for networking (keep your personal info out of this account).

9. Whenever you log on to Facebook, friend request one or two people it suggests to you. Easy way to grow your network! Don't be offended if not everyone accepts your requests.

10. Create a LinkedIn account under your author name.

11. If you create a blog, use your author name in your URL (<http://jillkemerer.blogspot.com/>).

12. Check out your favorite authors' websites and analyze what you like and don't like about their sites. Take notes on the types of pages they feature, the wording and length of the biography, and the overall look and theme of their site. Bookmark the sites for future reference.

13. Write a short author bio to use on your social media sites.

14. Determine how much time you can devote each day or week to building your platform. (If you only have 10 minutes a week, stick with a Facebook account. If you have three hours, consider blogging.)

15. Join a national writing organization and attend local chapter meetings. Romance Writers of America has given me priceless information, great contacts, and plenty of opportunities to "get my name out there" by networking in person.

16. Willing to speak at a local writers group? Draw up a list of possible topics. It's never too early to plan for speaking engagements. Remember, a fiction platform doesn't have to be contained to an online presence.

17. Create a Twitter account under your author name. If this terrifies you, see my articles **Twitter 101: Creating an Account** and **Twitter 101: Beginner's Tips**. And e-mail me with any questions ([jill\(at\)jillkemerer\(dot\)com](mailto:jill(at)jillkemerer(dot)com)) I'd love to connect with you on Twitter!

Breathe. You don't have to build a platform over night. Just add to your knowledge, add to your social media sites--and keep learning!