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Extend Your Author's Platform: Build a Web & Social Networking Presence

I. Set up your very own website.

1. Purchase a domain name.
2. Purchase web hosting service that supports WordPress.
Full disclosure: I use iPage for four websites because they offer sustainable, wind-powered services. If you use this referral link, I receive a treat; a discount on my fees or another incentive for sharing. There are plenty of other options out there; select the best one for your needs. <http://www.ipage.com/join/index.html?AffID=637620>
3. Download WordPress: <https://wordpress.org>
4. Follow instructions for setting up your website: http://codex.wordpress.org/Main_Page

II. Post useful, interesting information on your new website.

1. Author biography
2. Information about your book(s)
3. Links to all the places your book can be purchased.
Note: I have a firm bias towards independent booksellers. My suggestion is that you put your favorite bookseller first, as the preferred source for your books. For more information about the benefits of this practice, see <http://www.indiebound.org>
Also list all the other options for purchase. Don't leave anything out. Amazon, Kobo, Barnes and Noble, Google Play, iTunes, whatever market you can discover where readers can find your book.
4. All social networking, business cards, email signatures, and other promotional information should lead back to this website. This is your home base in the land of the Internet.
5. Keep your page updated with current information about where to purchase books, author appearances, contact information for media, and social media links. Don't just build it and neglect it. Even if you don't choose to have a blog, update your web content as needed.

III. Establish an author page on each of the market sources.

1. Amazon: <https://authorcentral.amazon.com>
2. Barnes and Noble: <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/help/cds2.asp?pid=8153>
3. Kobo Writing Life: <http://www.kobobooks.com/companyinfo/authorsnpublishers.html>

IV. Establish an author page on a popular social network built around books.

1. Goodreads: <http://www.goodreads.com>
2. Library Thing <https://www.librarything.com/home>

V. Establish a social networking presence.

1. Play around with several of the social networking options available. Experiment before linking your favorite space to your author page.
3. Find a social networking platform that resonates with you, one that you will use regularly as a part of the community.
4. Best options for authors right now:
Twitter: <https://twitter.com>
Pinterest: <http://www.pinterest.com>
Google+: Google+
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com>

There are more social networks out there. As you become a more sophisticated user, you may find something else that works for your audience and purpose.

VI. Create bookmarks, postcards, and business cards to promote your book(s).

1. Always include a link to your website so that readers can learn more about you and your work, connect with you on social media, and purchase your books.