

PODCAST 8: LIVE FROM LONDON BOOK FAIR 2016, PART II – WITH MARK DAWSON AND JAMES BLATCH

James: Hello and welcome to podcast number eight from the Self-Publishing Formula, live from the London Book Fair.

Introduction: Two writers. One just starting out. The other, a best-seller. Join James Blatch and Mark Dawson and their amazing guests as they discuss how you can make a living telling stories. There has never been a better time to be a writer.

James: Here we are for the second episode of the podcast on location from the London Book Fair. This is a huge important book fair that's held in Olympia in west London. Mark and I have come down onto the ground floor of the grand hall. This is an ancient building, we now know.

Mark: I do.

James: Do you remember the year?

Mark: Eighteen-eighty something. Eight?

James: Six. Two years out but it took two years to build it.

We are amongst the old, traditional publishers. I dragged you down here, reluctantly. We're standing around, I suppose a bit like ... I don't know. It's very intellectual. There's lots of people looking quite eccentric wandering around. Red trousers. Very much on view.

A few long lunches will have taken place over the last couple of days and do you feel in place here or out of place here?

Mark: I don't know. I feel more comfortable upstairs with the other indie authors obviously but this is all about books and stories. Print is just the delivery mechanism. It's just the same as digital. That's what I'm telling myself. It's all about the stories.

James: It is obviously all about the stories.

I was wondering if you felt like Henry Ford visiting a stable block.

Mark: Good one. Yeah.

James: Okay. In this episode of the podcast we had a good few chats and we've got a lot of people to get through in this episode. What we're going to do is keep it really focused on things that we think are going to be useful, as if you had come to the London Book Fair, the sort of conversations that perhaps you would've had as an aspiring author. We've talked to people who do different services. Some services you would've heard of. Some you may not have thought about. We're going to talk to an aggregator. If you don't know what that means, don't worry, I didn't really understand it before the chat.

We're going to talk to a couple of guys who've created a service that you can use online. It's kind of market forum for finding things like an editor and other services for authors.

We're going to talk to someone who talks in a language that sounds a little bit like traditional publishing, something you may not have thought of which is networking. Having conversations with publishers even and agents and how you do that and why it's still important to do that regardless of what your long-term aims are.

All good stuff and we're going to get going, aren't we Mark? With Draft 2 Digital, an aggregator. This is a service you've personally used?

Mark: I've been using Draft 2 Digital for ages and ages. They're really, really good. Great way to get books into different platforms which you might not be able to get to yourself. Also, very easy and makes things nice and simple. At the end of the day, what do we want to be doing? We want to be writing. Don't really want to be wrestling with metadata. I'm a big fan of Draft 2 Digital.

Dan: Hi, I'm Dan Wood. I'm the Director of Author Relations at [Draft 2 Digital](#).

James: To the uninitiated, explain to me ... I know it's an aggregator.

Dan: Yes.

James: Just explain to me, in words with one syllable, what you do.

Dan: We help authors publish world-wide. We do conversion of word documents if they don't have the digital files they need. We convert them into all the different files like MOBI and Epubs. Then we help them distribute and manage their titles. We go to iBooks, Kobo, Barnes & Noble. We help with print-on-demand with Createspace. We go to a lot of little ... Not necessarily little, but national retailers like Tolino, which is a German alliance of bookstores. We can get your books into the German e-retailers as well.

James: Formatting is a different thing.

You would expect the Word document to be formatted into chapters. Is this something you take as well?

Dan: Our technology handles the formatting piece of it. As long as you followed a consistent Chapter One, Chapter Two, our software does all the rest.

Mark: I can step into that probably. I use Draft to Digital to format my Word documents into some formats. That's my advanced readers and it's a really smooth process. Very easy to use and it produces a lovely document at the end of the day.

James: You get it into stores?

Dan: Yes.

James: This is more than just a technical job of getting it acceptable for a store but you are the person who places it there.

Mark was telling me before we started the interview that some reach you have, an author wouldn't have without you.

Dan: Yes. We do merchandising with our retailers. We look at the books that are doing well and we let the retailers' merchandisers know. We nominate the books for promotions. All the retailers have ongoing promotional areas, like a free first-in-series, some of them. Others do like daily deals, so we nominate books for those deals.

Mark: Practically, what that meant for me: Dan and the team put one of my books into a promotion at Barnes and Noble and that hit number 1 in the store. That would've been something that I wouldn't have been able to do myself. I owe Dan about six beers probably by this stage. He's counting.

James: Formatting and creating the MOBI and stuff is presumably, if you're technically minded and you've got a gift in the time, is something you could do yourself.

Dan: Yes. We accept epub's. People bring us their own epub's all the time. Some of them do it themselves. Some of them have their own formatters that they hire and work with. We also do some neat stuff with automating in-matter and so we can with either the word document or epub's now, can

generate your Also-By page if an author wants us to. Which an Also-By page is at the end of your book with links to all of your other books.

The way we can do that so we can generate a link for the retailer, specific to there retailer, so that the epub we send to Apple is going to have Apple links. The one that we send to Barnes & Noble is going to Barnes & Noble links. Their readers can go on that platform and click once and buy the book.

James: Great.

Dan: It's something that if you do it yourself as an author, that can take hours.

Mark: It's a pain. A big pain. That's a really helpful service.

James: How much does all this cost an author?

Dan: We have no upfront fees, no hidden fees, it's all based on listing with us. So long as you list a book with us, we get about ten percent of retail list price on each sale. Author retains all of the rights. You can list or delist from our service at any time.

James: That's ten percent of the sales from your site. Your list.

Dan: From wherever we distribute it to.

James: Okay.

Dan: That ends up being, with all our current contracts with everyone, the author makes right around sixty percent of the retail list price on every sale and that include below 2.99 and above 9.99. Some authors can make more money going through us than going direct for selling like box-sets or when they have a book up for .99 cents for instance.

James: Sure. A couple of questions then. How's it going?

Dan: Going great. We're up to 80,000 books that we distribute. We work with around 20,000 authors. We started keeping track of all the people who were hitting the USA Today or New York Times bestseller lists, in 2015 we had fifty-six books hit the New York Times Bestseller list. So far we've had like thirty-nine books hit the USA Today list this year, including Mark Dawson.

James: Mark's pointing at himself. Modestly.

Dan: That's very exciting. We get to work with some high end authors. We're continuing to build tools and try to open up new sales channels. That's one of the reasons we came here to London Book Fair is to meet new international book sellers.

James: You're doing great by the sounds of it. 80,000 books. 20,000 authors. Presumably growing.

Dan: Yeah. We opened about three years ago or just over three years old.

James: What's your twelve month growth? Do you remember what you were twelve months ago?

Dan: I don't.

James: I put you on the spot here.

Dan: I know we doubled from 2014 to the end of 2015. I think we've been growing about a hundred books a day and about ten authors a day. We have been growing significant I just haven't calculated it.

James: It's doubling. Probably an annual thing, I would imagine at the moment. You're at a really good place to get a birds' eye view of the industry, of the self-pub industry. We're standing at London Book Fair, one of the biggest book fairs in the world. Still kind of dominated by a lot of traditional media. Where you're looking out, this is the more vibrant part?

Dan: It's amazing. I have the greatest job in the world because I get to go around all these conferences and meet with authors and romance authors are so savvy right now and they're doing so many things. I get to meet a lot of authors who are taking your course on Facebook ads. Authors are really starting to figure out the marketing angle of all of this because you want ... The first thing you want to do is make sure you've got good books and you have a lot of them. After that, you have to start working on the marketing piece and authors are getting better and better at that.

James: Something that we're noticing as well. It sounds like Dan's got a fantastic position in a growing market.

Mark: Yes. I remember very well seeing a post on K-boards from Aaron Pogue. He was involved in the establishment of the company three or four years ago. They've grown so fast though. I'm a big fan of Draft 2 Digital. Dan's been great and his team have helped me a lot with getting things done. I am one of their fan boys.

James: Finally, Dan, the podcast is for lots of people starting out or some people quite advanced.

What sort of tips and secrets do you have from the industry? What could you say to author to get this part of things right? Apart from obviously use Draft to Digital.

Dan: On the Draft to Digital angle, we do have a phone number, a toll free number, so anyone can call us when they have questions. Instead of spending a lot of time trying to research it.

For new authors, I tell them, worry about writing a few books first. Write in series. I would encourage people to get to about three books before they spend a lot of time on marketing or trying to get promoted. You're going to give yourself a much better chance if you've got books for readers to move onto. Readers now have so many options if you don't have something there for them to buy next they're just going to forget about you.

I would capture emails from the very beginning. No matter who you are as an author, set up an email list, capture. Let people opt in so you can tell the reader that you've got a new book. You'll be able to use that later for some of the marketing pieces.

Use pre-orders. Apple, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, all let you set up pre-orders. I highly recommend them. Amazon lets you do pre-orders now as well. Some people don't like that because they split the rank over time but for everywhere else I would use pre-orders so people can always buy your next book.

Those are pretty much the main things. Maybe on the cover front. Always make sure your cover is genre appropriate. I see a lot of authors come with these great, beautiful covers but they don't really tell you what genre it is. It's so important that your cover promises the reader what it's about. It needs to look like the other covers in its genre but stand out a little bit.

James: We've got a podcast on covers coming up. It's something I think about as the time you spend looking at a cover in the electronic world is the blink of an eye. If it doesn't tell that story, you're quite right, straight away you've lost that opportunity.

Dan: It's got to look good on thumbnails because a lot of covers are designed to look beautiful as a printed book but when you're looking at

little inch by inch, you can't tell what it says. You want it to pop as a thumb nail.

James: Great advice, Dan. Thank very much. Where are you off to next? Back to Oklahoma?

Dan: Back to Oklahoma, then Chicago, and then everywhere else. I got a couple of weeks at home now. I'm excited.

James: Good. You enjoy that. Nice to speak with you.

Dan: Thank you.

James: Dan Wood. Draft 2 Digital. Really nice guy and very much in the type of mold of the new businesses that exist in the digital space that just talk and feel different from the old traditional businesses.

Mark: All around nice guy with probably the best beard of the Book Fair.

James: He had a good beard. There's no doubt about that.

I do love Olympia. It's a very atmospheric building. Huge cavernous hall room. As I said, reminiscent of a railway shed. Built around the same time as the great London terminals.

We've got Bloomsbury books just away to our left. GMC Publications.

We've got quite a few of the old names and some print people as well in all sorts of countries sitting here. I've noticed some stands. France and, I think, Holland out here as well. They take a stand and they give some slots to up-and-coming businesses in their own zone. I know the UK does that abroad as well.

Traditional fair, I suppose, in many senses. But we're still going to focus on the emerging area of this whole publishing industry. The next couple of guys we're talking to, again, very entrepreneurial, very focused on helping and servicing particularly authors who are in the digital space.

How do you get to know the [Reedsy](#) pair?

Mark: They reached out to me, I think, when they started. They looked at a few authors who might be able to do some out reach for them and Ricardo and Emmanuel both really smart, young guys. They're winning awards for the services they are providing with Reedsy. It's a great platform. Very exciting. Really useful for authors if you're looking for editors or creative professionals to help you get your book in ship shape and ready for sale.

James: Okay. If you don't know what Reedsy is, they do a good job of explaining how the company works and how it can offer its services to you. Emmanuel Nataf and Ricardo Fayet, and Mark Dawson is still here. Another little part. Another little corner of the London Book Fair. You're the Reedsy guys. It's actually quite difficult to say!

Emmanuel: It is difficult to say. That's why we picked the name.

Ricardo: Only for you, James.

James: Only for me.

Tell us a little bit about where you started and where you're going.

Ricardo: We started a couple years ago and our goal was really to create a marketplace for publishing professionals, so that authors could find the perfect editor, the perfect designer, publicist, marketer for their needs. Really separate the good people in the industry from the wannabe editors, wannabe designers who are not that good and who are maybe going to be a bit cheaper in their services for authors but, in the end, authors aren't going to see the value because they're not going to sell their books. That's the kind of the whole vision behind Reedsy.

Now we have 400 professionals in our marketplace that we handpicked out of 10,000 applicants because so many want to apply to be listed on Reedsy because they know they're going to get work. We do a lot of selection and we pick the really good people. We now have, I think, 15,000 authors signed up who browse the marketplace.

James: Emmanuel, a good start. You've had a lot of applications. You've got a good, vibrant marketplace now.

I guess you're tapping into the fact that when people start writing a book they literally know nothing about that side of things.

I'm writing a book and I have no idea where I'm going to go for an editor apart from, obviously, I kind of do know where I'm going to go now. But people don't generally, do they?

Emmanuel: That's why we like to help them via our blog, first of all. We publish a lot of interesting educational content that they can go through about editing, design, marketing, etc. Also, when you create a Reedsy account there is always the help button in the top bar that you can use.

Then someone at the team at Reedsy can then respond to you regarding any questions you may have regarding the self-publishing process.

James: We know in digital businesses that niche works. There are quite a few. There is People Per Hour and Fiverr. In my industry, the creative industries, we use those quite a lot. They're quite broad and general but you've really created something that is of value because it works to a specific audience.

Ricardo: Definitely. I think it works particularly well in this niche because the people we have on Reedsy cannot be on Fiverr and other marketplaces like that because it's marketplaces are very competitive in terms of bidding and prices. Where you post a project and ten, twenty people are going to bid on it, usually you're going to go for the cheaper one. Real professionals are going to be competing against, as I said, wannabe freelancers and they're going to lose every time because the other ones are going to be cheaper. They're going to leave those marketplaces.

That's why when we started Reedsy; we talked to a few editors and they told us we were number one on Elance. We left Elance because it didn't work for us anymore. We were getting constantly outbid by cheaper people who were not as professional and as experienced. That's the kind of people who at first started signing up on Reedsy and that's why we're not so directly competing with marketplaces like Fiverr.

James: How do you, Emmanuel, ensure that? If your USP here is a quality professional at the end of the bid here, not just some rank amateur in his bedroom or her bedroom, how do you guarantee that's going to continue to be the case?

Emmanuel: We go through a creation process at Reedsy. As Ricardo said, we have hundreds of applications every week to be listed on the marketplace. What's interesting is we get full profiles from our professionals and then we go through those profiles, their portfolios, their previous work experience, and then we decide whether they would make sense for our marketplace or not.

James: You do, I suppose, but every business is going to be occasional. You're quick to respond if I had a bad experience with somebody from your site? There's a way of you dealing with that?

Ricardo: Yeah. That never happens.

James: Yeah. Yeah. Of course.

Ricardo: There is a satisfaction guarantee on Reedsy so whenever that might happen we are happy to offer a refund or anything like that. As I said, it's going to happen very few times and we can go ahead and we're happy to go ahead because we don't want our authors to have a bad experience. In the end it's our authors really.

James: Great.

We were talking just earlier how many little industries have been spawned, enabled because of the internet and the digital world that we live in. This is a great example. Isn't it, Mark?

Mark: Yeah. I've been a big fan of Reedsy right from the start. I've known Ricardo and Emmanuel for a couple of years now and it's exactly the kind of the thing that was needed. I'm asked today at LBF, two people have asked me for editors and I've referred them both to Reedsy because I know they'll get a really good service there. I think you guys are doing a great job and keep doing it.

Ricardo: Thank you, Mark.

Emmanuel: Thank you.

James: You're listing to the Self-publishing Formula podcast with James Blatch and Mark Dawson. We are on location at the London Book Fair in West London. Mark, we're now going to talk about networking, which I suppose is sort of the purpose of coming to a conference like this. I think it's something that doesn't necessarily come naturally to new authors in the digital space.

Mark: No. Authors by disposition tend to be quite introverted. It's not something I was very good at doing either. It is important to reach out and meet people at places like this. For example, ten minutes ago I had half an hour chat with the guys from BookBub, which was great. It obviously could be quite important for my career. Bookbub is great. It was excellent to reach out and make connections with those people.

There is still no real substitute for pressing the flesh, that kind of thing. It's all fine with emails and talk on the phone but there's nothing quite like having a face to face conversation.

Justine Solomons, who runs [Byte the Book](#), probably one of the best connected people I know in publishing in London. She seems to know everybody.

James: Well she said you know everybody as well.

Mark: She's just being nice. I think between us we are pretty well connected. She is really excellent at putting herself out there and meeting new people. It was really great to see her yesterday.

James: I should explain that for listeners not in the UK, not familiar with the [restaurant called the Ivy](#). It's a very famous celebrity haunt. It's famous for its lunches rather than dinner. I've been there a couple of times. We used to work quite close by, didn't we, Mark, together? I never failed to be impressed with the people you recognize sitting at tables across the way in there.

It's particularly famous in literary circles because the whole publishing world is famous for its long liquid lunches. That's very much the old industry but guess where we met Justine Solomons? They've got a pop-up version of the Ivy here at the London Book Fair.

Justine: Byte the Book was initially set up to help authors get published and to meet agents and publishers or to help them publish however they wanted to publish. If they wanted to publish independently then to have the right people around to do it.

Later on, I realized that the publishers didn't really understand technology and I wanted to bring them in that network as well. Now we educate the whole industry and authors what's happening in technology.

The third thing we do is connect people to each other and other industries that can use their content. We do that primarily by having regular events. We run those events at very nice places.

James: I should say, we're sitting in the Ivy.

Justine: Yes. Yes. We started off in the Ivy. We've run events there. We run events at the Groucho. We're about to start a series of events at the café Royal.

James: Byte by the way is spell B.Y.T.E. so people understand there is a digital foundation to the company. I was thinking that one of the aspects of indie publishing is that it's quite isolated existence and quite an isolated

industry. Whereas as the old publishing industry, here we are sitting in the Ivy. This is quite old publishing, people meeting all the time. I guess that's the gap you're trying to plug.

Justine: I want to help authors become more literate in the publishing industry. To know that they've got choices. I think there is a misconception that you need to get an agent and a publisher and then everything's done and your book is going to sell millions of copies and that's the end of the journey. That is a way that some authors can publish and they can do very well.

If you're a mid-list author, you're often going to be neglected by a big publishing house. You need to think about your marketing strategy and I think independent authors like Mark have done incredibly well on understanding on how to market themselves.

One of the issues that the big publishing houses have is that they publish a lot of books. You're just one author or one book in a mountain of books and they don't have enough people to do that. As an author, you're a much better place to market yourself. I want to empower authors to be able to do that.

I'm not dissing the traditional publishing industry. I think for some authors, that is the right route to go. You might only like writing and you might be terrified of social media. That can work for you.

Often people that come to Byte the Book are self-actualizing. As I said, we have events at very nice clubs and lots of the members of those clubs come to our events. They've done brilliantly in their careers. They might be journalists. Mark you were a lawyer before you started publishing. You've done really well. You've got a lot of skills that you can offer the publishing industry and your books.

One of the other issues with the publishing industry ... I sound like I'm slamming the publishing industry. I love the publishing industry. It's amazing. But, it's a bit introspective and you have a lot of publishers talking to each other about what they are doing. They might not have ever worked in other industries. There are a lot of other industries that understand consumers a lot better.

Mark: Different ways of marketing. Digital marketing. I first met Justine when I did a talk with Amazon by event and I can't remember exactly what the title of the talk was but it was-

Justine: The author's journey.

Mark: That author's journey, right. We ended up talking about things like mailing lists and advertising and different ways of doing things that were perhaps alien to some of the people there. I'm not dissing the traditional industry either. There is definitely an exchange of ideas that can take place at meetings like that and everyone benefits.

Justine: I think so. I think so. One of the interesting things that Mark did at that talk was talk about Facebook. I had heard, repeatedly heard, from publishers that Facebook doesn't work for marketing your books. They're all on Twitter and they are all talking to Twitter. They're only really talking to themselves. Most people are not using Twitter.

Mark: Twitter is an echo chamber basically.

James: Organic, say. We have some dalliances with advertising, paid advertising, with Twitter and we've got that to work.

Mark: Yeah. Yeah.

Justine: It can work but most people are on Facebook. You've done very well.

James: Not even organic Facebook. Even that, the algorithms have now changed to really preference paid advertising.

Justine: Like you, you've lost my name, another example of someone who has gone from outside the industry. Lost My Name Asi Shrabir's background is in advertising and has sold millions of copies of children's books, specific to their name. He's done that through Facebook advertising.

Mark: I have one. I didn't know you knew him.

Justine: Yeah. He's spoken at Byte the Book.

Mark: There we go.

Justine: He's from the beginning.

Mark: I told you. Justine is the most well-connected woman.

James: Some of that resonated. I was thinking from your back story, you certainly had that experience with traditional publishing. Once again, say we're not slagging off. It's about how the two of them are going to go

forward together. Your early experience with trad publishing was quite dispiriting wasn't it?

Mark: Yeah. It was. Everyone knows my experience. The marketing was minimal, at least visibly. I have much more fun these days and it's more effective. As you've said, Justine, I'm not lost among a big catalog of books that gets attention squared among them. From my books, I am only marketing my books. I am invested.

James: One hundred percent of the attention.

Mark: I'm invested in them because that is my business. I can be effective that way.

Justine: The thing about technology and social media is that it puts the author and the consumer, the reader, much closer together. Amazon has done brilliantly to help that distribution channel. When you're talking directly to the authors, no one is telling you to do that. You're doing that genuinely. I follow you on Facebook. You're telling me about your life. You're telling me about writing as an incidental part of that. I feel invested in you and therefore I want to read your books and I feel like I know you. Whereas, if you're being mediated by a publisher or an agent or someone else, there is a distance. There is people taking chunks out the value chain.

Mark: Yeah.

James: How much of your work or your role do you see as educating traditional media? Because it still does seem to be a them and us feel. Certainly here in LBF.

Justine: I set up Byte the Book four years ago. My background is in technology. It's not in publishing. I'm a bit of an interloper. I like reading and I love writing, so that's where I came from. I like to think we agitate for change a bit.

The consulting business we've set up, publishers want to meet us and find out what's new in tech. There is an appetite for it but the problem is there is not much revenue in traditional publishing. I think there's much more revenue actually in independent publishing and self-published authors. They're limited a little bit by their budgets.

The good thing about Byte the Books is we have a regular debate every month. Rather than having a big conference that you have to pay 400

pounds to go to, Byte the Book event people pay 99 pounds a year to join or they can just come to a single event for 20 pounds. They can get involved in the debate and meet people outside the industry and on the night of our events, sometimes we're the highest rated hashtag in London. I think we're actually, I'm a little person, I set up a small company but it's growing and I think at least I'm trying to make a change.

James: You've got a list of the events, I can see, in front of us. I can see Frankfurt. Largely in London aren't they?

Justine: They're largely in London but members of Byte the Book can get in free to London Book Fair. I've just come back from Bologna. You can get in free to Bologna. I've got a ticket allocation for Frankfurt Book Fair as well. I've been invited out to Berlin soon to run an event there. We're starting to become more international. There are people who are interested in partnering with us all over.

At the moment, we're primarily focused in London. I also run events in the US in New York.

James: Okay. One final area we'll talk about is quite a lot of students that listen to this podcast are fairly advanced. They get it. They understand advertisement and social media. The rest of it. One of their worries is everyone is going to discover the secret and one of the things that we often say to them is there are hundreds of thousands of other authors, and I don't know what your view is on this.

What sort of percentage of the people writing books really understand the digital side of things?

Justine: Lots of people who write spike in English and have limitations when it comes to technology. That's not the thing they want to do. Lisa Jewel spoke at one of our events and she said, "I'm just a writer who sits in my garage and I don't want to really get involved in social media." She's been pushed to and I think anything you can do can make you better than most authors. Most authors want to write and actually that's fine and you can be that kind of author. Just make friends with somebody that's a bit more marketing. I like writing but I like marketing more. I like networking. So make friends with people like me or Byte the Book or people like Mark.

James: You don't have to do very much to elevate yourself above a big crowd.

Justine: There was a woman who spoke on my panel yesterday in the Author HQ and she is a retired facilities manager from Yorkshire and she started writing in 2012. She wrote her first book and didn't really know what she was doing. Put her book on Amazon and she went to number one. She's written nine books now. I asked her about social media and whether she used social media. She said, "I don't really understand it but actually I do it every morning. I do it for an hour and the rest of the day I write." I think having it, putting it in its place, you are at an advantage over somebody who is completely addicted to social media and who is doing it all the time.

I'm sure you, Mark, allot time for your social media so you've got time to write.

Mark: Yeah. Mornings. I'm creative in the mornings so I tend to do the writing in the morning.

Justine: When your energy is up, yeah.

Mark: I'll kind of have a bit of lunch, go for a run, and then in the afternoon I'll switch over to the other part of my brain and do the marketing, social media, emails, all that kind of other stuff. It's complimentary. It's difficult to be successful if you're only good at one thing. I think you need an affinity for both.

Justine: I think one of the reasons that Byte the Book has done well is because I like to cooperate with people and you can either see people as your competitor or you can see them as allies. Nottingham Press collaborated a group of independent authors, collaborated and helped each other. I know you talk very much about how you've worked with other people as well. We've tried to work together as well. I just think it's better to try and help each other and to change the market together. Don't worry if someone else is doing something similar. Try working with them first.

James: Absolutely. Collaborations run through us. It's how we operate as well. It's more fun. From your life point of view, it's much more enjoyable thing than being spiteful and nasty and hoping other people fail, which

seems like a very negative way of living. Although, lots of industries do work like that.

Justine: Co-op-etition.

James: I like that. Good word.

Justine: It's something with the ships in the harbor. If you raise the tide, all the ships come up.

James: Final question, Justine. Top tips then for somebody, for free, on this occasion, new authors perhaps don't quite understand what they should be doing.

What are the first things they should be doing?

Justine: I think they shouldn't be afraid of the publishing industry. They're just people. Agents and publishers aren't gods. They are real. Try and get out and meet people and maybe when you go out and meet people the first thing you say shouldn't be, "here's my book." Try and get to know them. Places like Byte the Book or Following Tips that Mark's doing. Just try getting involved in the world, either in the real world going to events or by getting involved in social media.

James: You're very hands on, I imagine with this business.

Is there something you would ever take to the states?

Justine: I'd like to very much. I had a meeting actually yesterday with somebody that was interested in doing it there. I've tried to do it there. I think we are behind the states in independent publishing but we still do cooperation better here. I have this idea of hub publishing. When you self-publish, you don't publish on your own. You publish with a group of people around you. Getting the right team around you and having people that support you and I think that's something very much that we can educate others about.

James: I felt very sort of very traditional publishing there sitting in the Ivy, chatting with Justine, a great net worker. It is important. She's absolutely right. You can do so much sitting behind your keyboard but at some point there is a such a difference when you've had a conversation with someone. I think Justine's important point she made is have an chat with an agent or with a publisher but not with a view to them signing you. Just have a chat and find out what works for them, what they're doing, what the latest things

are, and then in the longer term you can start think about when's the appropriate time for you to go and talk to them more professionally. Of course, at which point, hopefully, you've got a bit of a idea of how much you can generate by yourself and therefore how you can negotiate.

Mark: Yeah. Exactly. Building up your network so that when you're ready and you need something, there is someone you can reach out to because you've met them at something like this or you've met them here and then have had a longer conversation somewhere else. It's just building your network, building your connections so that you're ready to take advantage when you need to.

James: Lots of familiar, friendly faces in the indie publishing world here at London Book Fair. Mark spent some time talking to people he met for the first time but we couldn't resist saying hello to our friend, [Joanna Penn](#), who is such a star for lots of people, especially in this particular digital space. We caught up with Jo. We're standing in front of the children's book section and you have to walk all the way through the children's book section, which is colorful and lovely by the way, to find the author HQ, where the indie authors hang out and that's where we caught up with Jo. Here we are, at the LBF with our friend Joanna Penn. Hello, Jo! How are you?

Joanna: Hello, James. I'm good. How are you?

James: This is the first time we've met in the flesh.

Joanna: It is indeed.

James: Very exciting.

Joanna: It is very exciting.

James: Virtually we've met a lot and have spoken a lot. You've got a couple of sessions. I know you've done panels.

We saw you a little bit last night, looking like Madonna with the old headset microphone. What have you been doing?

Joanna: Well, I was speaking on the business of writing. I did a really packed session. I was really pleased because sometimes you get a lot of first time authors here who don't want to talk about the business side but I actually did a pretty good session on how to make a living with your writing. Talking about the importance of covers, the importance of editors,

the importance of series, lots of different tips. Also product. How to turn one book into multiple products.

That session was sponsored by Kobo, of course, who we love.

James: You had Mark next to you.

Joanna: Yeah. Mark Lefebvre was there. It was really good, I think, to talk about multiple countries, multiple languages and of course, Kobo takes us wider. We all have Amazon but I think it's really important to also think about wider options for other countries.

I've been coming to the fair for five years now. It's been nice to see the sessions expand into more indie topics. Sometimes it can be a bit basic.

James: Yeah. Getting into a little bit more into the detail of stuff.

Do you find that's because the audience is better educated now and they're coming here better equipped?

Joanna: I think so. There have been some people who have been meeting here, you know, for the last five years. There are always new people, new authors. Of the talk yesterday, there were probably a quarter were first time authors, like yourself.

James: Absolutely yeah.

Joanna: First time novelists. What's nice, I think, is for them, I know you do, think about this from even right now when you're still writing. You're actually thinking about how can I do this sustainably for the long term? That I think is a mindset shift. Authors have traditionally not actually thought that much about how we going to make an income with this or perhaps haven't even considered that there might be a long term business as a writer.

I think that's why it's exciting. I definitely got on my hobby horse a bit.

James: You said to me that you were a bit worried you may have gone on a bit but I don't think so.

Joanna: I think I just get so excited. I think many authors don't realize is what you're potentially signing over to a publisher are intellectual property assets that can make you money for your whole life and seventy years after you die. I've just been talking to a publisher just before our chat here and we were talking about how advances have really stratified at the moment. We've heard of a multi-seven figure deal that's been done yesterday. But

that's one in a hundred thousand authors or I don't even know the figure. Very, very, very rare.

Then the other end of the scale, for one author to get that big of an advance, the other end end of the scale, a lot of authors are getting two grand, five grand advances. To me, if you self-publish-

James: That's a month's income.

Joanna: Yeah. It's potentially. Even if you're making fifty pounds a month from your self-published book, you're still going to make that money back in a couple of years.

James: Not a lifetime plus seventy.

Joanna: Yes. Exactly! I think when you look at the longer term money and do some basic sums the income that people are looking at as an author, the money side of being published at the moment is becoming quite desperate.

Now would I accept a multi-seven figure deal? Oh yes! I'm sure you would.

James: Absolutely. Still waiting.

Joanna: Exactly. But the number of people getting that type of thing is going to be very, very small. Then on the other side, I almost think that indie is the new mid-list. You can make better money as a mid-list indie than you can as a mid-list traditionally published author basically.

James: Do you feel that ... We're here in the author HQ and you're talking to an audience that is better educated and understanding that I'm writing a book doesn't really work in the same way as I'm working on a career.

Whereas your third book, by the way, should be in your head already. All that stuff.

Out there, it is physically out there, we're kind of shunted to one end here. Is this whole traditional publishing industry with their headline deals, do they get it yet? How's your feeling?

Joanna: Last year we were in the digital area, the technical area, which I thought was great. That's where we should be. Now we're right in the back, behind the children's publishing area, which I think says something about the way we're being viewed this year. Authors are not central to the London Book Fair. Actually, this year, I feel that we as authors might have moved on. Actually, perhaps, this isn't the right place for us to be.

I haven't felt it before. I felt like, "No. We should be here, stamping ourselves on the industry." But now I actually feel like, and [Joe Konrath](#) has said that it's a shadow industry, I actually feel like I'm proud of that. I like the shadow. I like the deviant. I like the independence to it.

James: The delinquent nephews. That's what I described on social media today. What it feels like.

Joanna: Yeah! Do we want to be with the suits in big room? No. We don't have to be. It used to be like, "Oh actually, we want to be you." Now I feel like we've got a movement. We're proud of being indie. I want to wear the hashtag #proudtobeindie t-shirt. I don't know. I don't feel left out. I feel like we've got our own thing going on.

James: If I was to take a wind of you that was not just from an indie point of view, I look at that industry the same way you looked at HMV and Virgin Music when the music revolution was happening.

HMV could be the biggest streaming music service on the planet and instead...

Joanna: They could be who?

James: Exactly. Now we're talking about names. World's longest river, next to us, that we haven't heard of fifteen years ago, dominated that industry. I just think, are they really rearranging the chairs as they head toward the iceberg? It's still not really dawning. The fact that I've come here and seen us shunted here has made me a little bit dispirited. You know what? Get on with it and we'll get on with our thing.

Joanna: Exactly. That's true. What I also think is what's happening with indies, I've been meeting some other indies that have been around a long time, a lot of indies are starting their own publishing companies. This makes me laugh because the outsider will always become the mainstream eventually. What I think we're going to see in the next five years ... This is my pick for the next five years. By 2020, what you're going to see is some of the biggest indie authors here starting publishing companies that will be bought by the big name publishers.

James: If they survive that long.

Joanna: If they survive that long. I really expect that's going to happen just because that's what happens to publishing companies. They get

acquired. What we have to remember is, who is going to be the next outsider? Who is going to be the next revolutionary? Because I feel like the indie revolution, as it was a few years ago, is now more mainstream. It's not a surprise anymore.

James: Last question then. We'll move on to the final point. Obviously, it's a podcast and like your podcast you're so well known for your top tips and you are mentioned in all our other interviews, including by Mark yesterday. What are your key points that you're making to authors now who come up to you and say, "Jo, how do I make it?"

Joanna: I still come back to a fundamental question, which is: What is your definition of success? Someone came up to me yesterday and she said, "I've got this offer from a publisher, should I take it?" I'm like, "I can't tell you that."

If you're definition of success is to be on the bookshelf at your local bookstore or at the high street, the biggest Waterstones in the country, or you want to win a literary prize, you probably still better off getting a traditional publishing deal.

If your goal, if your definition of success is to say, make a six figure income, which I know Mark and I both agree on that. Maybe you do too because you're a part of this. That certainly, for me, is I want to do this for a living and that is my definition of a good living. Then you're better off going indie.

The thing is until an author figures out what they want and their real reasons for doing it because a lot of authors just want validation. Am I a good writer? These are difficult questions to answer. You know, indies measure it in numbers of books sold, numbers of reviews, emails from readers, but some of them just want someone to pat them on the back.

James: Harper Collins or Bloomsbury side of the book.

Joanna: Or they want to say to their mom and dad or sibling, "Hey look at me. I was published by Penguin."

I think there's nothing wrong with ego. That's what is so important. Very, very important for authors to just stop and think about what their definition of success is. You could be a very unhappy indie if your goal is to have

Penguin on the spine, right? Or the other way round, you could be a very unhappy traditional published author if you want to make a living.

This is the thing, that's my biggest tip: What is your definition of success?

James: Thank you, Jo. You know, there has got to be a gap in the market for a big indie conference, hasn't there? If this is no longer feeling like perhaps the place we should be.

Joanna: It's interesting. There are a lot of indie conferences in America. I just came from the Smarter Artist Summit in Austin, Texas which was fantastic. I was just talking to Tina Folsom, who is over there. They were in Hawaii. There are some very big conferences going on now but they're in America. So yes, it would be great to have one in Europe. Thank you!

James: Sounds like an idea doesn't it?

We're still in the children's book section. We're just a block away in American street talk from the author HQ and I don't want to get too close because I think the next session is about to start. You're not doing it are you?

Mark: No. I've lost my voice. I'm not speaking to anyone today.

James: Mark, your LBF, just tell me a little about that before we sign off. We've got a little treat just at the end, particularly, for the SPF community but your LBF.

You've had a busy time, lots of conversations, you've been on a couple of panels as well. Has this been valuable for you?

Mark: Yes. Three panels. I did two for Amazon and one for the [Alliance of Independent Authors](#). That was great fun. As busy as I expected. Yesterday was really frantic. I did the LBF for the Amazon talk and then went back to their stand and didn't really stop talking to authors ... It must have been three hours. I had people waiting to talk to me. Sometimes three people in the line waiting to talk. A few people taking selfies with me which was the first time that's ever happened before.

James: You're a rock star in indie publishing.

Mark: It's a bit weird. I'm losing my voice a bit now. I've had meetings and had BookBub earlier today. I've got a Radio Four Producer who I have a chat with in five minutes or so. I'm ready to go home. I'm tired. There has

been a few late nights, parties, and things. I'm pretty much done in. It's been great.

James: We've got one more item to play out and then we'll say our goodbye. Last item, in fact for me it's been a highlight of being here, is when somebody has tapped us on the shoulder and said, "I know who you are. You're Mark Dawson and James Blatch. I listen to the podcast," or "I'm in your Facebook group," or "I've done your course." In some cases, and, Mark, it's been absolutely brilliant to talk to quite a few students who've walked up.

Each one of them has an interesting story. Haven't been able to get all of them on tape but there is a couple of really interesting guys, including an ex-CID detective whose obviously doing police procedurals. A guy named James Sumner, who we think is one to watch in the future as well. He's going to have a really good career.

Here's the best of the little chats of people who came up to us from the Self-publishing Formula community.

James Loscombe: Hi, I'm [James Loscombe, self-published author](#). I've just published a new book called Abomination yesterday.

James: Abomination Yesterday. Good.

James Loscombe: It was published yesterday and it's called Abomination.

James: Oh! Ha ha. Abomination, yesterday. Sounds like a good title!

James Loscombe: Sounds like a good title. Yeah.

Currently I do everything except for the editing and the covers myself. Everything goes on Facebook by me. Everything goes on Twitter by myself. Reddit as well. I found that to be quite useful. There's a lot of groups on there that have a sort of place for you to put books up and people come in there and comment and vote them to the top and hopefully buy your book.

I find it very difficult to market standalone books. It's very easy to get a lot of sales on one book and then you're starting from scratch again on the next book which is frustrating but I'm trying to build up a brand around the author name more than the title themselves.

I write while I get the time. I have sort of a production line method where I'll write first draft stuff in the morning, then in the afternoon I'll be working on

editing another book, and then in the evening I'll be planning the next book. It's all kind of split up to keep it interesting.

James: You're going to have to find some time in your day for marketing in the future.

James Loscombe: And networking as well. I really need to start meeting more authors, which is why I'm here actually.

James: I'm going to try and read your body language a little bit, that you're little less comfortable with the idea of selling and marketing than you are with the writing. That's probably where a lot of writers are.

James Loscombe: Yeah. Massively. Yeah. I just don't know where to begin. You kind of have your Facebook and your Twitter, which aren't really great places to market because most of the people who are following me on my personal Facebook and Twitter are my personal friends rather than...

James: You're talking organically?

James Loscombe: Yeah. It's kind of up until a couple of years ago, you didn't need to do any marketing but now that's the way the industry is going. You just need to suck it up and start actually paying for stuff because that's been a real resistance point for me. I'm finding the time to be able to do anything as well is ... I've got two young children and a wife to keep happy as well, there isn't a huge amount of time in my days to market.

Darryl: Hello! My name is **Darryl Donaghue. I'm a crime fiction writer.** Ex-detective from Surrey police and now I write crime fiction.

James: Excellent. A man who really knows what he's writing about when he's writes crime novels.

Darryl: Pretty much. That's what the readers say.

James: We're excited to meet you because you're a member of the Self-publishing Formula community.

You've taken Mark's course and we're happy to say, it's been a bit of a life changer for you.

Darryl: That's right. I was a police officer full time and the dream was always to write as my full time career. Thanks to Mark's course, I'm able to do that.

James: That's really good. You've got a couple of books now that you are now marketing. You're a big traveler as well.

Darryl: Yep. I'm a big traveler. My whole life goal for I want to live is to travel and to write and it looks from September, I'll be doing that. I spent the last two years living in Korea and teaching English to kind of get some money behind me and travel and to get the time to write.

James: Sounds like a fantastic career ambition. Let's talk a little bit about the novels. Obviously, they're crime, police procedural I guess you'd call them.

You were a CID detective?

Darryl: That's right. I was a CID detective for nine years. I worked in general crime investigation, also a sexual offenses specialist for a couple of years as well.

James: Now, without libeling anyone or destroying any future court cases, what sorts of cases did you deal with?

Darryl: Everything from the serious stuff upwards. As a uniformed officer you go out to the sticky, plastic jobs and do the blue light runs and the exciting bits.

James: Sticky plastic jobs, what's that mean?

Darryl: Any emergency calls. As a uniformed officer you go to all emergency calls and then if it's a serious investigation you pass it to CID. I would've taken over things like burglaries, robberies, rapes, all the way up to murders. Being the initial investigative responder on those. There was a whole range of serious investigations.

James: There are a lot of crossover from crime novelists and police or detectives. I used to be a news reporter and I loved covering crime and I loved being with the police about it as well because it's actually a fascinating world. Hence the fact that there are so many books and TV series based on this but I think a good detective is someone who is himself fascinated with human behavior. That's a key link when you're writing.

Darryl: Absolutely. That's the real link between my detective work and my detective books. My readers are fascinated with human behavior. I'm fascinated with human behavior. I can bring that realistic element of investigation into the fictional world. There is going to be some poetic license of course, certainly with the pace of investigations as anyone whose been a victim of crime may know.

James: Are you a stickler for the detail in terms of procedure?

Darryl: Absolutely. Absolutely.

James: You couldn't write a detective doing something you knew in a million years no detective would do.

Darryl: No. No. No. No. I think as soon as you put your name out there and say, "I'm an ex-detective and I'm writing this," the internet will punish you if you're not a complete stickler.

James: The flip side is, I notice that in the Facebook group, the SPF Facebook group, you've offered your services for other crime writers.

Darryl: Absolutely. If any other crime writers in the group that want a sound board for ideas or want a legal point discussed, I'm more than happy to discuss via PM.

James: Let's talk about the marketing side of things. I know you took Nick Stevenson's course. Took Mark's.

Darryl: 10K Readers and Facebook Advertisers.

James: So where are you in terms of your marketing approach now? Is Facebook advertising a big part of it?

Darryl: Yes. Definitely. Between this year and last year, it's a different world. I think like a lot of indie authors I pressed the publish button and then hid under the duvet, waiting for something to happen. Whereas both Nick and Mark's course helped me take control of everything.

I use permafrees on the first book, which is done wonders. Made a mailing list with Mail Chimp. The link is I the front and the back of the book. At the moment, I'm using a 10,000 word short story, which is converting quite well for me. I know, in general, it's better to use a full novel again and give the best value I can but with me only having two books, I'm using that as a stop gap. Then as the catalog grows, the second book will become the giveaway. The incentive.

It's collected on Mail Chimp and then Mark's Facebook ads of course keeps the second book ticking over. It brings in right at 150 percent on a book that's 2.99 and 2.50 in the UK. Doing well. Again, when the third book comes out, there will be box sets. There will be a box set out there to get the higher ticket price for the similar spend.

At the moment, I'm doing what I can with what I've got. It's every stage to improve it, improve it, improve it.

James: Write some more.

Darryl: Write some more, yeah. Get that catalog up.

James: The thing I guess lots of indie authors, certainly ones that listen to this podcast, have done where they write the book in the first place, wonder what happens next, and then realize:

Ah, success isn't a coincidence. It something that you make happen to you by understanding the business side of things.

Darryl: Mark's course and courses like that give you the almost like a fast track to it. Rather than bumbling through, they've bumbled through for us so that we can benefit. Shrinks the amount of time it takes to get to where you can be a full time writer or whatever your goals are.

James Sumner: Hello, my name's **James P. Sumner and I'm a self-published author through Amazon**. I write mainly in the thriller genre. Very fast-paced action adventures. It's been a life-long passion of mine. Thanks to people like Amazon, Mark, things like that, I'm realizing my dream at the moment.

James: You're part of the Self-publishing Formula community.

James Sumner: I am, yeah. I watched the free sort of video course multiple, multiple times. I'm in the Facebook group. Met so many amazing people through that group, such a vast source of knowledge. It's really incredible. Once the full course opens up, I'll be handing over my money gladly.

James: Shouldn't be an advert for the course but that's very kind of you to say that. Certainly for the free course and the Facebook groups are free to join and very much part of the community that we're building. It's great to hear that there is value to be had.

Where about are you based, James? You writing full-time now? Still trying to transition to full-time or?

James Sumner: At the moment, I'm writing part-time. I have a full-time job, which doesn't afford me a lot of spare time but any spare time I do, family permitting, I spend it writing. The goal is, obviously, to be full-time. I never set out to do this thinking that I'd have a million dollars and Tom Cruise to star in my movie. I just want enough to support my family and I want to be able to do that by doing something I love. I've been writing for just over

three years now. I'm learning more about the industry. I'm learning that it's not just about being a writer. It's about a business. It's a brand that you have to build. It's a lot. It's a mine field but I'm enjoying every second of it. James: It's a totally different one, isn't it? It might not be the one people expect when they start off thinking I'm going to be a writer.

James Sumner: Exactly. Yeah. I suppose I had this kind of glamorized idea of what it was about. Sit in coffee shops and look pretentious and write on my laptop. When you think about it, it's like ten percent of what I do is create. Then you've got to find an editor, your publishing, and everything else. It's a mine-field but it's been such a pleasure learning that industry and as much as I don't necessarily want to be a publisher, I want to be a writer, it's fun knowing the whole aspect of it and spending as much time as I can doing that.

James: Where are you at the moment? Obviously, you're building a mailing list?

James Sumner: Yeah. I've been building a mailing list for just over 12 months, which is gone really well. I have my own Facebook page and website and has developed its own little community.

I'm from the north of England, Manchester, and there I was walking through Manchester Picadilly Station a few months ago and I was carrying up some tickets and I heard this voice behind me go, "Oh my God! It's you!"

I looked around and this woman who works there, running towards me. I'm like ... What the hell is going on?

James: Shall I be scared?

James Sumner: She went, "Oh my God, it's James Sumner."

"Yeah."

She said, "I'm such a big fan. I've read all your books."

I was like, "Really? How have you done that?" She seen me through the Facebook page and I knew who she was because I'd interacted with her quite a lot and that was just incredible.

Am I famous now or something? I'm not sure. That was great. Something like that, sounds cliché to say, but that's why I'm doing it. That kind of interaction. She was so positive about my books when all her colleagues

came over she was telling them to go and buy them. You can't get publicity like that. That word of mouth, genuine followers.

James: What a great moment for you. So a couple of quick questions to try and get some value from you because other people, perhaps, slightly behind where you are. You're two years into doing your mailing list and so on.

What are your tips for people who have got the book but who haven't really taken the next step?

James Sumner: First tip would be, as a few people said, definitely get over that stigma of giving something away being a bad thing. My mailing list was literally 10/20 people when I started out. I gave the first title of my series away, basically to say here's a taste. If you like it, come back and buy the rest. People do. Having that faith in starting off on the back foot in a way. It's worked wonders. It's developed my mailing list to the point where that list is a valuable resource for me. I can launch new books to an existing platform that puts it in a high enough chart to be successful. Definitely that is one big tip. Focus on the mailing list. Don't be afraid to give something away because you'll get it back ten fold further down the line.

James: With JV Chamary now.

JV, just introduce yourself to me and tell me where you are and what you're doing.

JV: I'm mostly a science writer. I write articles and magazines and I am a Forbes contributor, so I write short articles online. Generally about popular science. A couple of years ago, I decided to put my job aside because I wanted to be a writer rather than ... I was a feature editor for a long time and I didn't want to be an editor. I wanted to be a writer. That's why I got into the job in the first place. That was one of the factors that said I should quit my job and try doing writing full time. It was very hard.

I started writing a book basically about the science of superheroes and why that's important. The money ran out. So I started going back to journalism and the meantime I got commissioned to write another nonfiction book on popular science. I wrote that and it was published last year on biology, again, for a general audience.

Then because I got some money from that and I've been in the journalism, I've got enough to go back to the book that I really wanted to write which is this nonfiction book.

James: That was a commissioned book.

JV: The biology one was commissioned. This superhero one is the one I always thought I'd wanted to publish it.

James: Can I just say, I think that's a fantastic tag for a book? The science behind superheroes.

JV: We were chatting just beforehand about how writers say it's true and it's not. I think that's very interesting. I think it's more interesting to focus on what is true and then use it as a starting point to discuss other things. Basically what I'm doing is looking at the powers and the origins of superheroes and then making parallels with how you could actually save the world with those things.

James: Okay. That sounds great.

JV: It's a little bit weird but I think it's quite cool.

James: I think it's really cool. So where are you with the book? Finished?

JV: First draft is finished. I guess I'm kind of at the point where I'm sort of tidying up based on what sort of platform I'm going to publish it on. I've never really liked traditional publishers and my experience with publishing with a traditional publisher hasn't been great. I'd always kind of intended self-publishing. Now I'm at the stage where I'm trying to work out which I should do and doing a bit of research. That's why I'm here to work out what I need to do.

James: You need to listen to a couple of podcasts.

JV: Yeah exactly.

James: Okay. Brilliant to talk to SPF students. We're back at the Amazon stand which is sort of been our haunt for the last couple of days. You like it here because your name is up in lights. You've got a book cover of yours there.

Mark: The book is up there, yeah, exactly. It's been very nice to call this home base.

James: As we've said all the way through. Jo made the point as well earlier, it is sort of tucked away. Who knows whether this aspect of the book fair

will separate at some point and become its own show or whether we'll continue to come back here. But for us, it's been important. I really hope from the podcast listening point of view we've done a service to you in having those conversations that perhaps you would have had had you been able to get to London or the other book fairs.

Definitely, I think, from my point of view, writing my first novel, I've learned loads about the next steps that I need to be taking. I knew a lot about the marketing stuff but the aggregating of stuff I was clueless about.

Mark: Yeah. This is a great place to come for that kind of thing. Just kind of underlines that point about education and community. If you just look behind you, James, the authors have just come off the Amazon stand. We've got Keith Howton, Rachel Abbott, LJ Ross, they did the panel today and they're all swamped with authors who want to pick their brains and they're all answering questions. They'll be talking for another hour or two probably.

That's exactly what I love about this community. Everyone is so friendly and collaborative and prepared to help and just looking behind us now is a really good visual of what that means.

James: No snobbishness here at all.

Mark: Not at all.

James: It's been brilliant. Thank you so much for listening to our two special podcasts, live from the London Book Fair. We'll be back, of course, next Friday with a new podcast from Self-publishing Formula from Mark and myself, we'll say goodbye.

Mark: Bye bye. I'm going to bed. How about you?

James: I went out with some SPF students last night so I'm going to sleep in a corner.

Mark: Cool.

You've been listening to the Self-Publishing Formula podcast. Visit us at selfpublishingformula.com for more information, show notes, or links on today's topics. You can also sign up for our free video series on using Facebook ads to grow your mailing list. If you've enjoyed the show, please consider leaving us a review on iTunes. We'll see you next time.