

## **EPISODE 108: HOW TO ENGAGE YOUR READERS WITH FACEBOOK LIVE – WITH CECELIA MECCA**

Speaker 1: Two writers: one just starting out, the other a bestseller. Join James Blatch and Mark Dawson and their amazing guests, as they discuss how you can make a living telling stories. There's never been a better time to be a writer.

James Blatch: Hello, and welcome to the Self Publishing Formula Podcast with Mark and James. I hope you're having a great Friday or whatever day you happen to be listening to the podcast in this modern non-scheduled world.

Mark, I can't help but notice you've been ... I was gonna say you're clean-shaven, but I can't say that, but you are not Gandalf anymore.

Mark Dawson: I don't look like a hillbilly anymore, no. I was in Tenerife on holiday with the family and decided that it was too hot to look like a drunken coal miner, so I decided to shave the beard off.

But now I'm kind of missing the beard, so I may grow back a variation of it. I did, of course, as I was shaving off, there was more than enough to do lots of different variations on facial hair styles from the goatee to the handlebar to the Hitler.

James Blatch: Yes, it has to be done, doesn't it?

Mark Dawson: Absolutely. Yeah, right.

James Blatch: In the name of reclaiming the toothbrush ...

Mark Dawson: Exactly.

James Blatch: ... which we shouldn't let go to fascism.

Mark Dawson: Right.

James Blatch: Good. Well, you look well-rested as well. And that's good, that you look like-

Mark Dawson: Yeah?

James Blatch: Yeah, I think you do, actually.

Mark Dawson: Hilarious.

James Blatch: Yeah, I mean, the fact that you've asked me 14 times this week, "Who's on the podcast this week?"

Mark Dawson: Yeah, I know.

James Blatch: You keep forgetting. That's not actually the guest for this week, for this podcast, 'cause we're recording this two weeks ahead of the next broadcast. Complicated world.

But we've got a great guest. We've got someone who SPF hearts and loves, because she, right from the first moment she discovered SPF, it was an important part in her launching her career and giving up her day job, but she's somebody who's got the SPF philosophy all the way through her and giving back to the community and teaching others.

She's embraced a couple of areas that she's really nailed? Can I say that? 'Cause in America, it means something different, doesn't it?

A couple of areas she's really become an expert on.

Facebook Lives is definitely one of those areas. So we're going to hear from Cecelia Mecca in a few moments.

But before we get that, Mark, there's been a lot of attention on your switch from the wide area that you were in before, distributing your books to Kobo and everybody else, and Apple, etc. to try out exclusive again. I know you've been there in the past, but you've sort of made a fairly radical decision to go exclusive with Amazon.

**And, as far as we can tell, the headlines of what you're posting every now and again and a few screen grabs, this has not been a bad decision for you.**

Mark Dawson: No, it's been a bit extraordinary, really, and I'll preface this as I always do.

Someone in the 20BooksTo50K group this week said, "Mark is now recommending that everyone goes into KU," which really couldn't be further than the truth.

I'm a massive fan of Kobo, also we've had Chrissy Munroe on not too long ago. I'm a massive fan of Apple. I'm not such a massive fan of Barnes and Noble, but I've sold well there in the past.

Different authors have to think about which strategy they want to pursue, and it is very individual, and it took me ... I almost lost sleep over this decision, because I didn't want to upset my readers on other platforms.

But saying all that, Amazon made me a fairly attractive offer to come back into KU again, and I did that, pulled the trigger in the middle of December, and the first month was fairly remarkable.

I was a Kindle All-Star in the U.K. And this was in half a month, with only six books in, which was a good sign that this was gonna be fruitful.

So I put more books in as we went into January. January made not far shy of six figures, and then February, which is of course a 28 day month, at the moment, I look like I'll be at six figures fairly easily, which is remarkable.

Obviously that puts me on course for a seven-figure year. Yeah, it's nuts. I didn't expect it to be quite as effective as this.

It's not all profit. I'm spending around 10% of income on ads at the moment, so a lot of AMS ads, getting billed 600 dollars, no 600 pounds every other day at the moment, and a decent amount on Facebook ads, just to drive traffic to the books that I want to promote. Chiefly, the first one in the series.

But it's great. In the U.K. especially. The Cleaner, the first book in the series, it's been 99 pence for a while now, and it's number five overall in the store over the weekend, and is currently sitting around between 15 and 20 overall, and has been there for the last six weeks or so.

So really, really, really cool experiment that I think will be continuing for a little bit longer, 'cause it's made a big difference to revenue this month.

James Blatch: That's fantastic. So, for the uninitiated in this area, you stick your books into Kindle Unlimited, and I can see from a punter point of view when I go on, that are unique and subscribe to KU, and you can then read for "free," in inverted commas, and you get paid for page reads, which I believe is how this works.

Mark Dawson: Yeah.

James Blatch: But you're also talking about knock on sales, 'cause your books are still for sale on Amazon.

Mark Dawson: Yeah. It gets a little bit complicated, but the way it works is, every time someone in KU borrows the book, so clicks, "Read Now," that counts effectively, no one knows this for sure, Amazon has never confirmed it, but I think it's beyond anecdotal now, Amazon will count that as a sale.

So every time you have a sale, which is the same as you spending 99 pence on the book or downloading it through KU, that counts as a sale, and that will add to your ranking.

So the books, at the moment, are really visible. Because they're highly ranked, Amazon, I suspect, will be emailing a bit more often than would otherwise be the case. They're appearing on various charts, bestseller charts.

And the fact that they're highly rated and highly ranked means it's more likely that people who are looking for it will find them quickly.

And then, because of that big social proof, look at this it's ranked in the top 20, it must be good, even though not everyone will think that it's good, it's just another indication that it's something that someone should take a chance on when it comes to reading. So it all feeds in.

And then, as you say, you're paid by way of pages read. And I think last month it was something like 0.0042 cents per page, which sounds pathetic. When you have a few million page reads, it becomes a bit more useful quite quickly.

James Blatch: Okay, so people click on it, it counts as a sale in terms of your ranking, but you get paid for page read. But just going back a bit, it's still available for me to buy, 'cause I'm not in KU as a reader, I'm not in KU. So I can still buy it as a book. And you see that split?

**You see those traditional 70% royalties coming in as well as the page read?**

Mark Dawson: Yeah, you do. And the actual number of what you might term traditional or non-KU sales have gone up, so there's not a question of the KU borrows cannibalizing the sales.

In fact, it's the opposite. The increased visibility through those KU borrows has meant that the books have been actually bought in the traditional sense much more than was the case when they were out of KU.

James Blatch: Someone must have done this, try to work this out, these figures. So from an Amazon point of view, let's look at it from the Goliath's point of view here.

If you have a seven-figure year on income from Amazon, that's about 1.3 million pounds, dollars worth of books sold. Amazon keep the 300,000, 30%, you get the 70%, which is gonna be-

Mark Dawson: No, no.

James Blatch: No, no, no? Okay.

Mark Dawson: That's after that. So this is the royalty. So the numbers I'm giving you, the 100,000, or whatever it might turn out to be, that is my 70%.

James Blatch: Yeah, that's what I mean. So you get your million pounds, that actually means you sold 1.4 millions worth of books.

Mark Dawson: Yes, yes.

James Blatch: And they've kept their 30%.

Mark Dawson: Correct.

James Blatch: So without KU, that's very easy for Amazon to look at, for you to understand. And you've sold 1.4 million, you get your million, they get their 300,000, 400,000, whatever, it's complicated.

**With KU, who does it work best for? How do Amazon work out whether if they didn't have this book in KU and people had to buy it?**

Mark Dawson: There'll be a very, very complicated spreadsheet somewhere in Seattle that works all that out.

But Amazon reflects the amount of money in the KU pot, basically there'll be about, I think there's about 25 million each month, maybe more than that now. They've spent hundreds of millions on KU in terms of money to authors.

Obviously, we well know this, but Amazon will have made many millions more through the 9.99 subscriptions that they're getting, that they pull money into the pot, that money is then split on an equitable basis, depending on the page reads, between all the authors in the store.

So you'll get some people getting .0044 cents for one page read that they had, and then others that your kind of the Bella Forrests of this world, who I know now from a better understanding through experience of what the numbers mean, will be making, I don't know, 250,000 a month. North of that, probably.

There'll be other authors like that, too, but they will obviously take a much bigger chunk of that pie. And then on top of that, Amazon will award also bonuses to the best performing authors and books through the last month. So they're investing heavily in it.

Again, it's another way into Prime. This is always Amazon's end-game is to get you into the system, so that you subscribe to Prime, and then you buy your cat food on Amazon.

James Blatch: Yes. Recurring income is a huge area for everyone, really, at every level. And I guess it comes down to, they'd quite like me in KU, because I read quite slowly, probably one or two books a month. I just read as I fall to sleep every night.

Whereas, my wife will get through a book a week, maybe more. So if we're both in KU, she costs Amazon more, and I cost them less. And somewhere in between is the average person, who presumably reads less than 9.99 a month worth of books.

Mark Dawson: No, it's complicated. There's Scribd was another alternative, it was a subscription service, it may even have predated KU. But they had to take romance books out of the program, because romance readers are voracious, and they were reading too fast, so that it meant it was costing Scribd money, because they were paying out more than they were bringing in, because of those romance readers.

James Blatch: Can't get enough of that blue-eyed, black-haired man ...

Mark Dawson: Talking about me?

James Blatch: ... who mysteriously sits next to them on the plane and then it all starts. I could write romance.

Okay, so that's great ...

Mark Dawson: I need to apologize to all romance writing out there.

James Blatch: For generalizing about ...



Mark Dawson: ... just blithely dismissed.

James Blatch: Yes. I couldn't write romance.

Mark Dawson: Nor could I.

James Blatch: And I'm full of admiration for people who do.

We should just mention, just moving on from that ... That's great, really interesting, and I think in the future we'll have a little bit more a proper deep-dive episode into this whole area, exclusive and what.

Perhaps have a guest on who we can over to toss over the two approaches, might be a way of doing that.

Just something to mention while it's in my mind is that we have a new book available, which is on Pinterest. So, Pinterest, which is a social media platform. Actually, I quite enjoy Pinterest, 'cause I'm quite geeky and like looking at photographs of things like military aircraft, and luckily for me, that is also what other people who might potentially read my book look at. And so for certain genres, it really, really lends itself to promoting your book and being found.

Now I had a look into Pinterest ads. It wasn't a massively deep dive, but quite early on, it all felt a little bit like the Twitter platform, quite expensive for authors, probably not really worth it because the low price point of books. We parked it a little bit.

And then a woman called Pip Reid in New Zealand just emailed me and said, "Look, I know you're looking into Pinterest, and you probably don't wanna hear from me, but I just thought I'd email you anyway and say that it really works for authors, if you ignore the paid ads platform and use it organically, and I've cracked this code."

So that really piqued our interest, and Pip has written a brilliant short guide, 4-5,000 words, something like that, on how to use Pinterest for free to find your readers.

She drives large amounts of traffic to her book. It drives, I think 70% or 80% she said, of her sales are driven through social media, and 80% of those are Pinterest driven. So it's definitely something to look into.

The book is available at [selfpublishingformula.com/pinterest](http://selfpublishingformula.com/pinterest). Couldn't be easier. Pinterest. And you can download that book and get on that.

And we've got Pip on a future episode. I shall try and find out when and tip you before the end of the episode as to when she is going to be on, but she's coming up. It's a really good interview as well.

Okay, so that's the Pinterest book, and we are now moving into a launch phase for you and me and Mark and Mrs. D, working busily in the background.

We've got our 101 Self Publishing Course, which is going to open its doors in seven day's time.

### **Mark, who is 101 Self Publishing for?**

This is a paid premium course, we should say. It will cost you. We'll talk about the price and the options in a moment. But, first of all, who is the course for, Mark?

Mark Dawson: Well, it was intended to fill the gap after I did the Ads for Authors course, which is a little bit more advanced, still okay for beginners to get to grips with with the various advertising options, but I was very aware that lots of writers are struggling with basic things.

And then other intermediate writers, people who have published before and not having the success that they wanted. So what I wanted to do was to put together a course that covers you from the moment that you have finished your manuscript.

You type, "The end," what comes next?

It covers things like formatting, covers, metadata, uploading, building your mailing list, loads and loads on mailing list growth, simple advertising.

What else? How to make the various retail platforms work for you, merchandising, promotions, everything that I could think of. I just basically dumped everything in my head into the 101 course.

The intention was it would be the resource that I was looking for when I started to self publish, when I started flailing around in 2012, trying to work out why no one would download my book, or give me reviews, or all of the problems that writers have.

We put that together. We're really proud of it. We've had some amazing success stories through 101, as we have with Ads, and this will be the third time we've released it.

It's only available twice a year, so it'll be available now and then it won't be available until much later in the year. And yeah, we've had a blast putting it together. It's pretty busy right now, but it's gonna be fun.

James Blatch: I say so myself, it is a massively comprehensive course, but it's also very easy to digest the way that we've organized it, so you step through.

And it was your idea at the beginning, Mark, I think, to separate out the tech library, so you can do the teaching and understand the theory, and then you go down to the tech and work out how to do it.

We've got a few new additions for this time as well. In fact, for the first time, we're going to bundle in a proper separate course with 101, and that is a tie-in to today's podcast episode, 'cause that is done by Cecilia Mecca.

We asked Cecilia to author a course under the auspices of SPF on Facebook Live and how to do Facebook Lives, what to say, how to organize it, how often to do it, all the rest of you.

You're going to hear a lot of that stuff in this interview, but this is a step-by-step course on how to apply that.

If you're already in the 101 course, you will get that, of course for free, as part of your enrollment. And if you're going to enroll this time, that's gonna be there for you as well.

And we'll probably add that course, it's pretty close to completion, but we'll normally add it about 30 days after the launch period finishes, around there.

So yes, the address to go to will be revealed in a week's time, so we won't do that now, otherwise people go there and they're disappointed, because the course isn't open, but it will be open for two weeks also in a week's time.

We've talked about it long enough, let's move on to this interview. So we have Cecilia Mecca who's in Pennsylvania, beautiful part of Pennsylvania, actually, in the United States.

She's a fantastic teacher as well as anything else about her, and she's really making this thing work. So let's talk about Facebook Live.

I'll just give you the URL for the download she's going to talk about in that as well. So she's done a little cheat sheet, the sheet that she gives out to her

potential guests, come on because you will have to learn how to do this, basically how to interview people, which is much easier than it looks. And to get that cheat sheet, you can go to [selfpublishingformula.com/fblive](http://selfpublishingformula.com/fblive). That's foxtrot, bravo, live, Facebook Live, F-B Live.

Okay, let's hear from Cecilia.

**Cecilia Mecca, welcome back! You've been on the Self Publishing Formula Podcast before, haven't you?**

Cecelia Mecca: I have! And this is my second time. I feel so honored.

James Blatch: We should do a badge. We're doing pins this year, but there should be a loyalty scheme or something, you get like a card with some discount for your shopping.

Cecelia Mecca: Maybe a pin, James. Maybe I can get one of those special pins that you guys are going to be giving out.

James Blatch: We'll get you a pin, because I believe you have a mug already.

Cecelia Mecca: I do have a mug. I should've had it here today. I already drank my tea for the morning, but I do have a mug, so thank you.

James Blatch: Now we're going to get going in a minute on our main subject, which is Facebook Live. I'm excited to talk to you about that.

But let's have a little reminder of who Cecilia Mecca is.

**You've got a brilliant story that really is like two years old, isn't it, from your author career?**

Cecelia Mecca: Actually, one year as of last week, since I first published.

James Blatch: Wow.

Cecelia Mecca: Yeah. Yeah. It's exciting.

James Blatch: And you were a teacher before then?

Cecelia Mecca: I was an English teacher for 15 years. I spent the last five years as a curriculum consultant in language arts. And then, like I said, last year, on Super Bowl ... And, by the way, don't publish your first book on Super Bowl Sunday. That was not the best day. I made a lot of mistakes, that was one.

But yeah, about a year ago right now I published my first book, and I'm about to publish number six, actually, next month. Or this month. The end of this month. So, yeah, it's been a one year journey for publishing, but of course, a few years before that that I began the publishing journey and was writing.

In August of 2017, I actually did leave my job, replace my income, and am a full-time romance author now. So it's quite exciting.

James Blatch: That was a great story, and we loved hearing it. And your books are a fantasy version of medieval England, where I'm standing. Well, except I'm in the real one, and it's not medieval, but apart from that ...

Cecelia Mecca: You're in the real one. I'm jealous. You know how much I love your country? I can't wait to get back.

I've been an Anglophile for as long as I can remember. And so being able to put two things that I love: so romance novels and medieval England ... And I kind of dipped my toes into Scotland, but I'm really kind of an England girl. It's just quite fun.

There's a subgenre of romance that is medieval and Scottish and that's been able to sustain this, which is a lot of fun, because some people have to choose between what they love to write and where the market is, and I think I've just found this perfect intersection.

Obviously, there's a lot more readers in other genres, like contemporary, but this is what I love, so this is where I'm at. It's a lot of fun.

James Blatch: Good. And one of the reasons I mention that is because people from time to time do say, "My niche is too small. I'm never going to be commercially successful."

But I think you have very clearly shown that if you get your ducks in a row, as we say, you organize yourself properly, you can earn a living from this.

Cecelia Mecca: Yes, you can.

James Blatch: Yeah, and you've been brilliant at it.

Cecelia Mecca: Thank you.

James Blatch: And the other great thing about you, Cecilia, is right from the beginning, you want to give back, which is a very SPF community thing.

You want to teach others, and you've become a bit of a guru in this whole video area, particularly Facebook Live. I know you're very active.

So how do you want to start? Where do you start?

**Let's start with the point of view that I think quite a lot of authors are nervous about this area.**

Cecelia Mecca: Yes. And understandably so. My very first Facebook ... I should probably take it down. Actually no, I'll leave it so that everybody can see just how bad it was.

The first Facebook Live I did, I was so nervous to be on camera that I wasn't. I turned the phone around. And the very first one I did was a video about a giveaway. And so I was giving away a whole bunch of paperbacks, and so I videoed those, and I said, "Here are the paperbacks, signed paperbacks."

I brought them back from an RWA, a national romance convention. And I said, "Here's what I'm giving away!" And that's how embarrassed I was.

I think it was three or four videos later that I finally turned the camera around. I think the second one, I showed my very exciting writing space, which is my couch.

So I completely get that. I was so nervous, that I couldn't do it in the beginning.

But once I kind of had the process down of, this is what it is to go on Live, I finally turned it around. And it took a while for me to get kind of comfortable, because it's just not something you do every day.

In my past career, I spoke in front of crowds. So that's not usually an issue for me, but there's something about the camera on you and you're talking to essentially no one, and it's a very odd experience. So I completely get that.

Best piece of advice I could give there is just to do it. I mean, there's no other way. Jump in.

If you want to turn the camera around like I did, go for it. Especially if you have kind of an interesting writing space, or if you're giving something away. Absolutely do that until you're comfortable.



And there's some other things, too. You can go live in a private group, you can test Live and kind of try it out, before you're actually in front of a group. But aside from that, you really just have to do it and kind of get used to it. And you will.

James Blatch: Yeah, absolutely. And I think there's no substitution for doing it and improving with experience over time. But you do have to get going at the beginning.

And yeah, don't worry about those first ones being awful. Everyone's first bits of everything are awful.

Cecelia Mecca: It's terrible. Terrible. My first book was awful, so there you go.

James Blatch: Everyone says that. Not about your book. Everyone says about their books.

Cecelia Mecca: Thanks, James.

James Blatch: Everybody is going on about it.

When I started in broadcasting, there were lots of little tricks for this. The classic one is to think of the one person you're talking to, particularly in radio, and I think radio is a very personal medium, which was the best way of thinking of these types of videos, I think.

**So just imagine that one person. A. That kind of settles your nerves a little bit, 'cause you don't imagine thousands of people listening to you.**

Cecelia Mecca: That's good advice.

James Blatch: And B. It makes you a better broadcaster, because you should always be talking to one person. I'm not a big fan of the Millennial YouTuber who says, "Hi, guys! Here I am today ..." like you're showing off to your huge audience.

Well, actually, it's my daughter by herself who's watching that video. So why don't you say, "Hi, how are you today? What have you been doing this week? Let's get into this."

And so there's a very personal thing, which I think is a good tip. And that, like I say, settles you down, hopefully, a little bit about nerves.

Cecelia Mecca: I love that. I'm going to actually use that, I'm gonna steal that, James.

James Blatch: You steal that. Stick it in the PDF. We should mention there's a great PDF giveaway for this, and I'll give you the URL now, which is gonna be [selfpublishingformula.com/fblive](https://selfpublishingformula.com/fblive). That's Facebook Live, F-B Live.

Just jumping to the end, and then we're going to come back.

### **How important has the Facebook Live element of your marketing been?**

Cecelia Mecca: Facebook Live is my marketing strategy for organic Facebook.

Obviously, paid Facebook and ads are a whole different ball of wax, especially with this new algorithm change with Facebook. I think we've all known that video has become more and more important on Facebook.

But just even in the last few weeks, I think it's even more important. And I mentioned this just in a chat the other day with an author. She asked that

same question. "Do I have to do Facebook Live? I really don't want to get on camera."

I said, "You know, I'm not sure if you have heard of, or if your audience has heard of Mari Smith, but she's kind of a Facebook guru in terms of social media marketing, and she gave us a behind the scenes on her insights one day in a Facebook Live webinar.

And just to kind of give you an example, every single post that she put out was a video. Every single one. So there were no pictures, there were no links, there was all video. And when I saw that, even I stepped up my video game.

Everyone doesn't have to obviously be a Facebook Live, but video is really where it's at. And I think Live, especially as I said with this algorithm change, and Facebook putting a lot of emphasis on building community, I think the easiest way to do that really is with Facebook Live.

I go live once a week, without fail, and I've been pushing myself to do twice a week, sometimes even three times a week. So yeah, it's become really important.

Especially in the organic Facebook page game. And I still think that there is game there.

Certainly it's a pay to play environment with Facebook in many ways, but my reach has been up about 5,000% since this Facebook announcement and that's purely because the live videos.

James Blatch: We've always known that Facebook loves their video and they want their video platform to thrive, so you're gonna get better and quicker reach with video. We know that as well in SPF.

**Okay, so you mentioned they're once a week. That's your target?**

Cecelia Mecca: I have a thing called Medieval Monday. It started off as Medieval Monday Live, Question and Answer, Plus Giveaway, and that was a mouthful. So it's Medieval Monday.

Every Monday I've established that I go live. And if I was a really, really organized person that could control my kiddos, my two young kiddos, I would actually have a specific time for that, too. And that would be the best case scenario, but I don't.

Life is a bit unpredictable. The kids are a bit unpredictable. So my readers know that I'm live every Monday, but sometimes it's during the day when I'm home, other times it's at night.

But I've found that, just by kind of checking my insights every week, seeing when I have people on there, and really between 3:00 and 8:00 it's pretty steady. I can just about go live pretty much any time and get the same number of users.

Now if I'm doing a new release or something special, then of course I schedule that, I tell everybody ahead of time. But more often than not, I just go live every Monday.

And then, as I said, some other days as well. But I kind of make Monday my Live day no matter what.

Sometimes that's hard, because really, frankly, I think that us ladies have a bit of a disadvantage. I have to all of the sudden do my hair and my makeup, and I hadn't planned on that. So my new thing has been going live with my New Orleans Saints cap. So, you know ...

James Blatch: Sorry, sorry. Do you think this happens by accident?

Cecelia Mecca: I don't know. I tend to think that you guys just kinda wake up like that, and I don't know.

James Blatch: Yeah, you are exactly right. You are exactly right. Yeah, that is an advantage.

You mentioned insights there, and I've noticed Facebook's doing its best to draw people's attention to "insights." There's an arrow and a big blue block appearing there.

**But I think some people will not know what you mean by that. Should we just talk about that?**

Cecelia Mecca: Sure. So once you can navigate to a few ... we're talking about Facebook pages now.

Of course you can go live in Facebook groups. You can go live on your profile. I don't do a lot of marketing on my profile for the book, so I'm speaking mostly about Facebook pages.

But when you go live on a page, you can navigate to a tab called, "insights," that gives you some insight into what your Facebook Live has done.

Pretty much, I take a look at ... on the left-hand side, you'll see a tab that called, "posts." And I'll go into my posts and compare live videos, look at, obviously, the reach, but even more importantly now the engagement, making sure that I have an understanding of what worked, what didn't.

And we can talk, obviously, about some of those tricks later, but just looking at each video, seeing what they've done and doing more of what works, obviously, is important.

And then, again, on insights, you can see what time people are on your Facebook, because there's some kind of commonalities with ... You might

not want to go live at 3:00 in the morning, but everyone is a bit different on their page. And so, like I said, I've noticed mine between 3:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. By about 8:30 it starts to tail off. That's my most active user base, and so that's when I'll make sure that I'm live.

You don't have to be analytics out the wazoo there, but just checking what time are people on and what are the videos done that I can improve on? I think are the two most important insights. At least, they're the ones that I look at.

James Blatch: We should say that the algorithm changes ... you referred to earlier, and Mark's been looking into this.

There is, probably, an advantage to starting to migrate towards a group rather than the page. But I know for someone like you, that is gonna be difficult, because you've got a loyal audience who know where you are on the page.

But I think people are starting to consider it.

### **And the insights are available on groups as well.**

Cecelia Mecca: They are, right. And I do have a group. I do Live in the group as well, once a week. And that's just as important.

I've had this group that originally started off as an ARC team, but now is a little bit more of a broader research group. Once that algorithm did change, I opened up the group.

Before, you had to apply to become a Border Ambassador. So my series is the Border Series, the Border Ambassadors help me spread the word about the books, and we chat about books. I do exclusive giveaways for them in that group.

But now, I have migrated that to be a little bit more of a public/private group and I definitely plan to move people from the page over to that group. And going live in there is invaluable, because it is kind of a smaller space.

One of the things I do there that's interesting is I don't do my hair and I don't do my makeup. I know that sounds silly, but I jump in there any time and I said, "Good morning, guys!" And I have the messy bun.

For some reason, they really tend to like that, and it's a lot of fun. And I just feel little bit more freer in there to chat and I get so many insights from them.

We were talking this week about my next series, and so I'm absolutely getting my pulse on where they're at, where their heads are at in terms of what they want. And that group has been invaluable. So I would say going live on both is probably the way to go.

James Blatch: That's interesting that you treat them differently.

Cecelia Mecca: I do.

James Blatch: You can cross-post. This video will go out on our page on a Tuesday night at 10:00 U.K. time, does every week. And once it's set up in advance, we cross post it to the groups, so it goes across all.

But I'm interested in the way that you've chosen to have a slightly different brand in your group.

**Is that because they're ambassadors, because they're kind of a closer team to you than the wider audience of your page?**

Cecelia Mecca: It is. And I've gotten to know some of them. I mean, I just had one of the readers in there, she said, "I need to send you a bottle of wine." Someone just bought me a book.

I said, "You guys are amazing! I'm giving you things, you shouldn't be giving me things." And it's actually just a really neat environment.

As I said, some of them have become friends, and so I just feel a little bit, I'd say closer, but kind of like I would with a friend of mine. Just "Hey!" Pop in. Kind of like your advice that you mentioned earlier, and I think that's great advice, both for the page and the group.

But when you were talking about that I thought, "Wow, that's what I do with my group, and I should try that a little bit more with the pages."

There is a bit of a more relaxed feel in there. It is a bit smaller, and I hope that doesn't change too much when we eventually get people migrated over, because I think that's my favorite part about being in that group is I do feel ...

And I can go in live there any time and I'll have an audience, which is also interesting. Even 10:00 a.m. I can pop in and people will jump on, and that's not necessarily the case on the pages.

James Blatch: Sure. So there's no limit to video. If you've got an ARC group, you've got your advanced reader teams group, you've got your wider group, each one of those should be somewhere you are thinking about using video to communicate.

Cecelia Mecca: Yeah, absolutely. 100%.

James Blatch: Okay, let's talk. Should we talk a little bit practical about this?

Cecelia Mecca: Sure.



James Blatch: So, we had a little off-air discussion about this, because you said, "Oh, I'm talking to you about video as if I'm like a video expert." Which I should be, but I'm not ...

Cecelia Mecca: I said, "I'm a little bit intimidated here."

James Blatch: But I'm gonna be honest, and it's clearly the case now that the production values that I'm a little bit obsessed with, because of my background, and I try and bring to our podcast, are actually unnecessary. And I'll be frank, they are ...

Next to somebody who produces video on their phone, is a good communicator, makes it regular, they are producing high converting videos that hit the spot that are sincere and this is their camera. I'm holding it up if you're watching the YouTube version. It's the phone in their back pocket and not the kind of 2,000 dollar camera I've got pointing at me.

So you don't need to be ... because you're doing the zeitgeist stuff. You're doing the stuff that actually we should be talking about and encouraging people to do. What I'm doing is nerdy and unnecessary in this field.

### **Let's talk a little bit about the technical side. You don't need a whole lot of stuff, do you?**

Cecelia Mecca: No. So obviously, my first videos I had nothing. Even now I have a microphone and I did grab some lighting, because I do a lot of videos at night.

But for the first few months of videos, I had absolutely nothing, it was just myself, my iPhone. Eventually I got a tripod, but then I realized quickly that I did like streaming video more on my desktop than the phone, so that's where I stream now.

But originally it was me and the phone, literally you can probably see my arm in those first few videos. And even they did well.

Every video that I put out, even back six or seven months ago when I started, those performed better than most of my other posts on Facebook pages. Like you said, even when the production quality ...

Now I look back and think, "Oh, my gosh! Why was anybody watching that?"

And since that time, I use a platform that I can talk about later, called BeLive, only because I do some author interviews.

But you really don't need anything. You go onto Facebook, and there's a button there for live video, and I would suggest just pressing it and not worrying about anything, getting comfortable with it. And then eventually you can get a little bit savvier.

Like I said, even now I have a microphone, I have some lighting, and I do pay for the BeLive platform, but that's about it. And that's six months of doing video.

You really just need a little bit of guts, really to just go live and make it happen. And the lighting is good. If they can see you ... I wouldn't suggest going live in a dark room or things like that without any lighting, but yeah. If they can see you, if they can hear you ...

You want to make sure that if you're out and about, that you have good connection, good wifi, because if you're breaking up, obviously that won't work well.

But besides those things, really, you don't need much at all.

**James Blatch: Just talk about the BeLive you mentioned in passing there, something that you use now.**

Cecelia Mecca: Yeah, sure. So on Medieval Monday, I'm probably 50/50 with going live myself and just giving updates and talking to whoever's on there, answering questions.

I will run some exclusive giveaways just for the Medieval Monday. But the other 50% of the time ... I'd say about three months ago, four months ago or so, I started bringing other authors on for interviews, and they did really well. Mostly because, if there's two of us, we have two people promoting it, two audiences ...

So when I switched over to author interviews, I use a platform called BeLive, because it makes it really easy to do an author interview. There is a free version, so you can go live for 20 minutes, I believe. I don't know if that's once a week. But there is a free version, and I started off with a free version, so you don't need to pay to do this.

But it makes it very easy. You can send just a hyperlink to an interviewee, and they literally just have to click it. Because one thing I've noticed is, doing the interviews, some authors are savvier with technology than others. And for some, just saying, "Listen, just click the link and I will be there." That's been a real life saver.

And then eventually I moved to the paid version, just because I'm doing longer videos more often. But you don't need that platform to go live. You certainly don't need it even for author interviews, but it has helped as I do this more and more. But it's a great platform.

You can also brand yourself. So you can put your logo up on your Facebook Live, and I've had BeLive feature my videos now, which is a lot of fun.

And there's a private Facebook group for that community. So they're in there, really invested in ... Obviously, your video's doing well, so they'll offer tips. And they have their own videos.

Once I really got serious about live and making it a part of my strategy, I really started with that Facebook group, just like I did with all of the other author groups and watching their live streams as they offered tips about how to do live video. Things like engaging the audience and such.

Yeah, it's a great platform. Not necessary, but something you might want to look into if you kind of really get into doing this.

James Blatch: I think there's loads of stuff once you start getting into this that people will discover.

We use some Telestream software. The people who do ScreenFlow on the Mac, and also allows you to record stuff and send it out. Schedule it for later in the week and whatever, so if you're gonna be away for a couple of weeks, you could still have a Q and A ready to go and so on. But that's a little bit down the line.

Cecelia Mecca: Yeah, it does that as well. That's a little bit down the line. But it does, it will allow you to schedule.

If I'm interviewing someone, those are obviously scheduled. I tell people ahead of time, "Listen, I'm interviewing such and such author on this date." So it does allow for the scheduling, too, and that can be important.

When it's myself, I typically am just off the cuff. But if I have an interviewee, then I'm pretty much always scheduled. But yeah, that's for down the line. No need to worry about that stuff just yet, unless you want to.

And I should say now, and you know this, and hopefully your listeners do too. I am so happy to help everyone. I've been an educator for 20 years,

and it's part of who I am. I love helping others, and I'm really only one step ahead of a lot of people. But if that is enough to be able to offer advice, I'm happy to do it anytime.

James Blatch: Well, we should say we've been very impressed with quietly watching what you've been doing, and in particular on the Facebook video. And there's no question, Cecilia, that you're ahead of the game.

**And I'm delighted to announce that you have taken up our request to do a course for us.**

Cecelia Mecca: I have! And that has been so much fun. It's a lot harder than it looks, though, James.

**James Blatch: What? Doing courses? Tell me about it, it really is.**

Cecelia Mecca: Yes. I'm really, really excited about that. As a matter of fact, I think I'm recording the very last ... well, probably not last. I'm sure you'll have me redoing some things, but I'm recording the last segment of that this afternoon.

James Blatch: I don't think people realize what goes into recording and producing a course. It takes it out of you. I mean, I did one between beginning at Christmas and middle of January, and I was 14 hour days doing it. It's a slog.

They're productions, but they're full of content, everything's gotta be planned and so-on. And that's why we came to you, Cecilia, because we knew ... And I've been to your house. I've seen you working. I know how dedicated you are to this stuff.

**So we're very excited about this course, and there's gonna be more details about that. Mark and I will talk about that in a minute.**

Cecelia Mecca: I'm really excited about it as well. But you're right. I was shocked. Not that I didn't think you guys worked hard, but those first few takes ...

I think I emailed you and said, "Is this normal? I'm doing some of these takes 15 times."

You said, "It will get easier," and it did. So it's been a lot of fun, though.

James Blatch: Great. Well I'm looking forward to editing it.

Cecelia Mecca: There'll be some editing needed, I think.

James Blatch: That's fine. We talked a little about the technical, and I know you said dive in there, press the button, start recording, but I know what's in people's minds listening to this is, "What am I gonna say?"

**Cecelia Mecca: What am I going to say? That's the next thing, sure.**

Okay, so obviously in the course, there's all kinds of tips, but just to try to think of some of the easy ones: question and answer.

One of the things I think people will be most concerned of, just because I was in the beginning: What if no one is there? First of all. And they very well might not be if you don't have a scheduled Live and you're just doing it in the beginning. But that's okay.

You can even have a question and answer all by yourself, because you can ask readers questions ahead of time, write out some questions ahead of time and say, "Okay, I got this question earlier and I'd like to answer it."

But then eventually people will be there and the question and answer is a lot easier with live people, but not even necessary.

So question and answer is very popular. I definitely do, any time I have news to share. A new release, a cover reveal.

Last night's Medieval Monday I did an unboxing. People love unboxing. I got the latest release that's coming out in February, and so I unboxed it and announced a paperback giveaway. That's always a lot of fun.

One thing I would suggest is asking your readers for ideas. So I would do that in my private group, or you can do it in a newsletter. "I'm going to be doing a live segment. What would you guys like to hear about from me?"

That's actually how the Medieval Monday got started. When I started a regular segment I said, "Okay, what do you guys want?" And they said, "Some of the research that goes behind your books, we would love to hear more about that."

And that's why I do Medieval Monday. I typically offer a tip about how I ... I just was researching tournaments yesterday, and, "This is an interesting fact about the medieval tournament in England," and shared it. That's how that kind of got started. As your readers, and don't be intimidated if there isn't anyone there.

The Facebook Lives ... sometimes you might think, "Okay, that's it. I'm stopping. There's no one here." But those Lives will gain legs even after you're done being live. So don't worry about that.

Even if there's no one, just keep going, keep talking. I'd suggest at least five minutes, but for me about 15 seems to be ideal, because by then, you want to give people time to jump into the live video. And I've done them for up to an hour, but usually they're about 15, 20 minutes long. But just go live for at least five minutes and keep talking, and eventually you'll get some people to watch.

Again, question and answers, ask your readers for ideas, think of regular segments that kind of go along with what your book is about.

One of my favorite Lives, and of course the interviews are a lot of fun too, but one of my favorite Lives we do a segment now called, "Under the Kilt," because it's a Scottish romance.

James Blatch: There's nothing under the kilt.

Cecelia Mecca: Well, I know, but that's okay, we go with it anyway. We just kind of take a look under, and we do different segments. It could be let's take a look under the kilt on what Scottish romance authors are ... these Scottish romance authors are planning to write, and it's just kind of what's in our queue, or different things.

So just think of what kind of theme. You can even work with other people to do Lives on. And so just some basic tips.

But you can google, "Facebook Live ideas for authors" and find an absolutely plethora of ideas and that shouldn't be too much of a struggle.

I know it will seem like it at first, but show your writing space, and then eventually, when you're brave enough, get on camera. Google some ideas and you'll find so many different things. And it'll just kind of flood to you as you look at your other authors.

Once you do Live, you start to notice other authors going live. And so I get a lot of ideas about what topics to go live about just kind of taking a look at what's out there already.

### **James Blatch: Do you make notes, Cecilia, before you go live?**

Cecelia Mecca: Sometimes. It depends. So if it's a just kind of off the cuff ... Last night I didn't at all, because I knew it was the unboxing. At this point, I



always make sure I introduce myself, introduce my topic, always about five minutes in, I've reintroduced myself, and that's something that you want to do, because people will jump in and out.

So you just kind of, real quick, "I'm Cecilia Mecca, historical romance author, and today we're unboxing the video." I knew that would take up some time. I knew we were gonna be talking about the new release. But other times I do.

And actually, BeLive has an agenda tab where you can write out notes. And I always do that with interviewees. I'll just make sure that the four or five main points I wanna hit are jotted down.

So it just really depends. And then in the reader group, never. It's really just, "Hey guys! I have just released the three books on audio, and who wants codes for that? Because I have some review codes." And that's it. And those tend to be my best ones, actually.

James Blatch: You mentioned earlier that you give people a chance to join, or you're aware that people jump into a Live.

**Does that influence the way you sort of have an agenda within the Live? Maybe the beginning five minutes doesn't have the main meat in it, or whatever.**

Cecelia Mecca: That's actually a good point, because ... I guess this is something that just comes from teaching and doing workshops. And I don't know.

What I always wonder about James, if this is how you do your interviews. Most often the best questions and topics come from what people are asking and where the conversation is heading.

So that's why I typically only have maybe one or two points that I wanna hit, and then really ... Especially once you're doing it and you have people there.

In the beginning, I was definitely more plotted out. I was a little bit nervous about, "What if I say everything in the first minute and have nothing to talk about?"

But once you have listeners and viewers, really the topics guide themselves from what they're asking and that kind of thing.

James Blatch: Absolutely. I would say that occasionally people ask me for interview tips and my only tip I ever give on interviews is the same one, which is: listen to the answers.

It sounds like a really silly thing to say, but when you first start out interviewing, you will not listen to the answers. You'll be thinking about your next question, you'll be nervous about what's going on, and you will hear people in the early stages of their careers ask a question that's literally just been asked.

So you'll hear maybe a very patient interviewee saying, "Well, as I was saying, the reason I went to London was ... " But yeah. Listen to the answers.

And the great thing about that is it then becomes a conversation. And then things start occurring to you. And the key thing in my mind is always, "what is the person listening thinking?" So if you say something, I think you've done it a couple of times in this interview, that didn't have a complete explanation behind it. So that's your job as an interviewer to say, "Actually, just what is that?" And if you think someone's thinking that, ask it.

Cecelia Mecca: That's a great tip. And it's harder than it looks, I will say that.

Interviewing other authors, I thought that would be as easy as just going live. Not easy, I mean, as you get used to it, it's not a big deal. You turn the camera on and you go live.

But then the interviewing, although it expanded both my audience and ... And it helped the interviewees, too, because I'll coordinate those as best I can around their releases and things like that.

I try to not make it completely promotional. I say, "Listen, we're going to go ahead and promote your book, obviously, we'll add the link in, but we're not here to just promote. We're here to talk."

And that's kind of my only rule when we're interviewing. But it's a lot harder than I thought, because they sometimes want to go in one direction. And I know I can kind of read the audience and know I might be losing people, so try to bring them back. So that interviewing is a whole separate skill set, and I definitely appreciate what you do having done it just a few times.

James Blatch: It definitely does get easier. Definitely does get easier. I barely make notes now, because I know the conversation's going to work. And I can trust myself to listen to the answers, hopefully. In this day. By this stage.

We talked a little bit about the technical side and a little bit about what to say and preparation.

I asked you at the beginning what difference it's made to you, and you said it basically it is your organic Facebook marketing technique.

### **Do you feel this is making an impact to sales?**

Cecelia Mecca: I do. For instance, I looked, because I had a feeling you were going to ask that question. So not particularly sales, because right

now I'm promoting a new release, and I don't pre-order. So I can't actually have a pre-order link out.

Instead I have a landing page that captures new subscribers for the book that's coming out. So, "Sign up for a new release notice." And I'm not talking about that, necessarily, but I will mention it very quickly and say, "Hey, I'm gonna pop in that link."

Yesterday I did a Medieval Monday, my goal was to show a paperback, to announce a giveaway. But then I mentioned, "If you would like a new release notice, I'm gonna pop that link in at the very end along with a giveaway link."

And since yesterday, I've had 111 sign ups on that new release notice. I'm sure some of them overlap and I didn't get a chance to look with my newsletter subscribers, but I'm sure some of those are new. And hopefully, eventually, if I can get them the new release and guide them back onto my regular newsletter list ...

Lead generation I'd say right now is what I'm working on. And you should have a goal. I mention that in the course as well. Reach is great and it's nice to increase that in a time where other people are seeing decreased reach on their Facebook.

But your time is valuable, so having a goal, whether it is to gain new subscribers for your newsletter, or to drive sales, knowing what the purpose is of your Live is probably where it starts, even before you hit, "live."

And then from there, you can kind of gauge. I just use Google link shortener to track clicks, and that's about as savvy as I get. Unless I'm integrating many bots, which a whole different ... the messenger system. A whole different ball game.

Then you know if you're successful or not. You can take a look at: How did the video do? But then did I get those link clicks? Did I get those new subscribers? Did the sales move at all? Then you can decide whether that video was successful.

James Blatch: Great. And as we always say, at it's most brutal, this is a numbers game.

**The more people you get onto your list to become in contact with you, ultimately, everything's a small percentage of a small percentage, but ultimately, that increases the number of the books you sell.**

Cecelia Mecca: Absolutely. And like I said, there's a different goal then in your reader group.

In my reader group, I'm never selling. My reader group my goal is to get a pulse on what they're saying, what they're talking about, what they like, what they don't like, build super fans. So it's a completely different goal.

But I still have a goal there. I'm not going live just because ... I should be writing, really. Pretty much any time that you're doing anything other than writing, you probably should be writing. So it has to be really very deliberate.

What is my purpose here? And that can be different, depending on who you're going live with.

James Blatch: My final area I want to explore with you is the impact you think Facebook Live has made on your writing.

**Because this is a different type of interaction than sending out an email?**

Cecelia Mecca: It's completely different. I'd say it's the most invaluable contact that I've had. It will impact my entire series.

I'm actually preparing to wrap up a series probably sometime in the fall of this year. And I was planning, to be honest with you, in going one direction. In my own head, it seemed like kind of a good thing to do.

I'll tell you I was kind of thinking fantasy romance, because I dabbled in it a bit and I thought, "Boy, this is a lot of fun!" I talked to my readers, I talked to the Border Ambassadors, and they're important, because they are my super readers, and I said, "Hey, guys! Here's what I'm thinking and I have some ideas and what do you think?"

And it fell so flat, I was shocked. I got off that live interview, I remember said to my husband, "So, guess what I'm not going to be writing?"

Not to say that maybe someday I can't dip my toes in fantasy romance, but I don't think my second year into my career is probably going to be the time for it, judging by their reactions.

They basically said, "If it's not real, we may not follow you." "Okay, great. Good to know. I will set a different course." So, yeah. It's invaluable, really.

James Blatch: I can see that, just from the way that you talk about it, how important it is to the writing process. And I think that's something we should, having just talked about the commercial benefit, talk about that benefit as well. And there's lots of authors, we keep an eye on them, who are using video well.

The only one I'm going to mention, actually, is Garrett Robinson, who we visited up in Oregon last year. He does a lot of live video, he's got a great personality, he's got a YouTube channel. And I think it, A. Keeps him sane. Because, you know, writers is a strange old profession. And B. When he

talks about it, I feel this kind of need from him to have this interaction with fans.

This is, by the way, completely new. There's no way in 1975 your average Booker Prize-winning author had anything like this kind of contact with their readers, but what an invaluable thing it is for you and Garrett and others, to understand what readers are thinking, what they like about the books, and even if it's subliminal, subliminal, next time you sit down to start writing, you're gently moving in the direction that people want.

Cecelia Mecca: Absolutely. I do. I think it's probably made the most impact in all of the marketing efforts that I've made up to this point. I can't imagine not going live now.

It was really scary the first time, and I still don't love myself on camera, although I've gotten used to it a bit, but that interaction, that question and answer is ... especially live.

I have some readers that will say, or viewers that will say that that's really just how they want to talk to me. Because I'm using their name, I'm being personal. And that's something I would definitely do, too.

Eventually, if you're doing Lives, you get comments and, especially if you have an agenda. It's a new release, let's say, and I really want to tell them about these two characters, but that just has to take a backseat to the people that are there. If they're asking questions, make sure you address those.

That gets easier, too. In the beginning, when the Lives got big enough that there were multiple comments, I really had to do it afterwards, because I wasn't savvy enough to kind of do both.

But as you get used to it, you can constantly acknowledge that. The viewers are there, acknowledge them by name, address their questions. BeLive has

a function where you can actually put their question on the screen, but again, that's for later.

And they really do like that and they want to know that you're there and that you see them and that you're hearing them. So yeah, that's a good point, so I'm glad you made that.

**James Blatch: The PDF Cecilia, you're very kindly putting together for the SPF Podcast listeners, what's going to be on that?**

Cecelia Mecca: So eventually, as I started interviewing people, I realized I could make the process a bit simpler by sending out a one sheet. I tried to make it simple.

Going back to my education days, the less you can say the better, so people will remember. But there were certain things such as, they were confusing the links.

There's one link that they needed to get into the interview, and then another link that they could promote to their own leaders that would turn into the live video eventually. So I include two interviews.

It's a one sheet. It has both of those links and very clearly delineated what they do. And then just some tips: wearing headphones if they have them, how to get on if they don't have some ... Some authors didn't have video or audio on their desktop. I said, "That's fine, you can use an iPhone, but have somewhere to put it, maybe have a tripod. Or if you have nothing, lean it up against something."

So the PDF is what I send to anyone that I am interviewing that kind of gives them some notes.

One of the most important things in the Live, and it mentions that in kind of bold in the PDF, is engagement.



For the longest time, I had a sticky note on my laptop that said, "Ask questions." If you're talking to the viewers, it's not an interaction. So I have to, even now, remind myself: stop, ask questions.

Because the more they answer, the more hearts, the more likes, the more comments, that actually spreads the video and gets it seen. And so if I can communicate that to the interviewee, as well, and we both do that, there's a better chance that the live video will get seen and will have greater reach.

So it's just a one sheet that I send to anybody that I interview, with some tips that I've gained along the way.

James Blatch: We appreciate that, Cecilia. So just that URL again, to get that PDF is: [selfpublishingformula.com/fblive](https://selfpublishingformula.com/fblive). Facebook Live.

I guess, particularly as we circle back to the beginning, the more under confident author who doesn't know where to start, the PDFs gonna be a useful starting point for them and these tips.

**But what message would you give to them? Shyness is a thing and lack of confidence is a thing when it comes to embarking on live video.**

Cecelia Mecca: Embrace it. It's normal. I mean, I've gone live every Monday and at least one other day of the week for months now, and every time I'm about to hit, "live," I get a little butterfly. And I think that that's normal.

It happens with everyone, so just embrace it. We all know that putting ourselves out there and doing something that we don't usually do is where all the really good stuff happens, right?

They say that. I do believe it's true. If you're so comfortable that you don't have those little butterflies ever, that means we're not pushing ourselves.

And I know that this can be really scary, because it's one of our greatest fears is talking to people.

And even though it's live and they're not sitting there in front of you, certainly you're imagining them. And maybe, with James' tip, we're only imagining one person, but it is scary. I wouldn't say scary after so many months, but it definitely gives you this, this-is-out-of-my-comfort-zone feeling.

But that's okay. It's normal and it's actually not a bad thing. So it's in some ways a good thing. So just give it a shot.

James Blatch: Cecilia, thank you so much, indeed, for joining us. I need you to get back to the course now and make sure it's finished. No dilly-dallying.

Cecelia Mecca: No dilly dilly.

James Blatch: No dilly-dallying. And thanks for the under the kilt reference, which I think is probably a first for our podcast.

Cecelia Mecca: Sorry about that. I am a romance author after all.

James Blatch: You are, and that is a mystery. Okay, it's a mystery author as well. Cecilia, thank you.

Cecelia Mecca: All right, you're welcome. Thanks for having me, James.

James Blatch: There you go. I'll tell you what's quite interesting about this for you.

First, what a fabulous interview from Cecilia. You can see what I mean about how clear she is and how authoritative she is about what she's learnt.

We're very excited about the course that she's done for the 101 students. It's great. It's gonna be a separate course.

101's kind of quite a big thing with lots of things bundled into it. This'll be a separate course that goes along with it, you get it for free when you sign up for 101. Or if you're already in the program.

That was great.

**I'll tell you what's interesting from your point of view, Mark, is that I think when I first met you, a bit like my fair lady, you were rough around the edges in front of the camera, weren't you?**

Mark Dawson: I was terrible. Yeah, I was awful. I hated it. It's a question of practice.

Think about it as chat. It's something that you just get used to. I didn't even used to like the sound of my own voice. I used to hate making phone calls from when I was a child. Used to hate it.

But the more you do something, the better you get. And actually, someone the other day sent out a nice comment in the Facebook group about how I had a "dope" voice. I don't know what that mean.

James Blatch: Dope?

Mark Dawson: Dope. Whether it's to do with drugs or not, I don't know. I think it was a compliment. So thank you for that.

James Blatch: Dopey voice. Yeah.

Mark Dawson: Practice makes perfect. Obviously, you've helped me out a lot along the way as well, and I quite enjoy doing it now. It's fun.

## **You reach out to your fans. What's not to like about that?**

James Blatch: I'd like to claim credit for it, but the truth is it is just about doing it. And I think it's those initial ones that put people off and stop them crossing that threshold.

And here's a secret, I'm going to give you a top professional tip to start off with, is that very first few times that you do a Facebook Live, they'll be pretty awful, okay? There's no getting around that.

That's the same for everybody. You feel self-conscious, you don't know what to say, but with a little bit of guidance and structure, the sort of thing we've heard from Cecilia, and just doing it, it'll become second nature.

And it should do, 'cause it's 2018 now, and talking to each other via video channels and so on is very much the way that we communicate. Kids will do this much more naturally than you will, probably.

But from my point of view as we always say, from business savvy point of view, don't want to leave money on the table. Another way of engaging readers, of turning them into more than just a casual acquaintance in terms of a reader, but of a fan of yours and somebody feels like they know you and they're invested in you personally.

They're going to be ready for that next book when it comes out.

Mark Dawson: It's something that is incredibly important. Video is big these days. Facebook loves video, so all the changes to the algorithm, posts being downgraded for organic reach ... I suspect different rules apply for video.

Video is still something that Facebook is pushing to corral for itself. Obviously YouTube is a big competitor there. And Facebook Live gets a lot of reach.

You'll find that you get loads and loads of views. Those can be shared, and before you know it, if you follow the lessons that Cecilia lays out, then before you know it, you could have regular forum where you meet your fans and you're gathering new fans all the time.

And it's free. I don't really know what's not to like about that.

James Blatch: Absolutely. I hope you've enjoyed that episode, and just a reminder of that where you can go to download that PDF from Cecilia, that is [selfpublishingformula.com/fblive](http://selfpublishingformula.com/fblive). And the Pinterest book is the same URL, except /pinterest at the end.

Good, well, you and I better go and do some work if we're going to get this 101 course up and ready. We've got some revisions to do.

We've got a guest coming in, haven't we? A very specialist guy from the community who's going to talk about keywords and categories, a very important area. So it's not something you're not good at, Mark. But it's good every now and again to get a real specialist in.

Mark Dawson: No. I'm good at everything. No. Not really.

James Blatch: You've lost your powers now, 'cause your beard's gone.

Mark Dawson: That's very true. Yeah, and he is, we won't name him, but he is very good at this. So yeah, it'll be great to get him in.

James Blatch: Thank you very much indeed for listening. Hope you had a good week writing, you can have a great week selling next week.

And let's start to see some of those Facebook Lives. It'd be great if you could cross-post a few of those into the Facebook group, so we can see

how you're getting on, and we can be supportive of those initial, slightly dodgy ones that we all had to go through.

Have fun with that, we'll speak to you next week. Bye, bye.

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