



EPISODE 156: 7 BILLION READERS, AND HOW TO REACH THEM – WITH KINGA JENTETICS

Narrator: On this edition of The Self Publishing Show.

Kinga Jentetics: Starting out from a small country and being a woman founder, there are a lot of challenges what you have to tackle. But our team is awesome and I'm really happy that we actually could grow our team, not just in numbers but geographically as well.

Narrator: Publishing is changing. No more gatekeepers. No more barriers. No one's standing between you and your readers. Do you want to make a living from your writing?

Join indie bestseller Mark Dawson and first-time author James Blatch as they shine a light on the secrets of self publishing success. This is The Self Publishing Show. There's never been a better time to be a writer.

James Blatch: Hello and welcome to The Self Publishing Show with me, James Blatch.

Mark Dawson: And me, Mark Dawson.

James Blatch: Such a double act, aren't we? I went to see Stan & Ollie.

Mark Dawson: I knew you were going to mention that.

James Blatch: Have you seen it?

Mark Dawson: I haven't. Is it good?

James Blatch: It actually really is good and it's a little bit short on storytelling. Because it's a fairly short period of their lives. It's like the



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autumn and winter of their lives but the acting is unbelievable. I mean, Steve Coogan, who I have to say is a man who does ... We love his comedy routine.

There's a famous British comedy character called Alan Partridge, who we all adore who he plays. But he does not come across as a nice man, Steve Coogan, I have to say.

Every time you see him interviewed, he's kind of aggressive and angry and there's sort of part of me doesn't want to like him but he is outstanding in Stan & Ollie and I've watched quite a lot of black and white Laurel and Hardy film since and he just brings Stan Laurel to life. It's amazing.

Mark Dawson: The problem with his is I like him too, obviously I love Partridge. But whenever I see him do something else, it's Alan Partridge playing somebody else. He's so intertwined with that character. I can't quite disassociate him from Partridge. So, I'll have to go and see it.

James Blatch: I know what you're saying. I think when you do see Stan and Ollie, there'll be no hint of Partridge anywhere. So, it's beautiful. And then when you watch the inflections on his face afterwards.

And from a storytelling point of view, that film itself is perhaps, and there has been a little bit of mild criticism of it as being not ... you know, big story that you can follow, it's quite short.

James Blatch: But, it led me to these Laurel and Hardy videos, which is pure storytelling and with not very much to work with. Very fixed cameras and fixed sets and beautifully done, beautifully done.

I wonder if my kids even know who Laurel and Hardy are. And of course, we just about grew up with them still, but I don't think they've ... I hope this film does do something to give them some more longevity because they're an amazing comedy-

Mark Dawson: We didn't grow up with them. They were long gone.



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James Blatch: We didn't grow up with them, but they were on TV when I was a kid. I don't think they are anymore.

Mark Dawson: I'm trying to think if I ever saw them on TV. You are older than me.

James Blatch: Not that much older.

Mark Dawson: 10 years.

James Blatch: Yeah. Anyway.

Mark Dawson: No, kids won't know who they are, no.

James Blatch: No.

Mark Dawson: Kids these days.

James Blatch: They should do. Anyway, it's a recommendation to go and see it if you want to enjoy some performances. John C. Riley is very good as well, of course as Oliver Hardy.

Here we are this week. We're getting into 2019. I still do that thing where I'm writing 2018 all over the place on things. I've been doing lots of spreadsheet work today and keep having to correct myself.

But, the year is moving on. We're making decisions, I think we talked last week about our travels. So, flights have been booked in the last couple of weeks for us.

We're definitely confirmed to ThrillerFest. John and I will be in ThrillerFest as will young Tom, we're going to call him. Young Tom. He's a new team member for SPF.

Mark Dawson: That's a bit patronizing.

James Blatch: I want to patronize him. Well, I'm 52 and he's 13.



Mark Dawson: That's more patronizing.

James Blatch: And we're going to hope, we think we're going to get Tom out from behind the keyboard at some point to record some videos for us and who knows, he could even make some podcast appearances. He could even make a podcast appearance, a show appearance I should say, in New York. But, we'll see.

But, we're also going to go to NINC. We're also going to go to 20 Books Vegas. So, if you can come along to any of those events, we would be delighted to see you and tap us on the shoulder and we'll buy you a beer and have a chat.

Now, ThrillerFest is good for us for meeting some big name authors last year. And it was our best shot at getting some of those big names onto to the Self Publishing Show. But, we are reaching out individually now. We said this last week. It was our aim for 2019.

You've had an email back have you not, Mark?

Mark Dawson: Yes, I have. I remembered in my previous life as a lawyer I did some work for J. K. Rowling in particular for her agent or her, yes, her first agent who subsequently he has become ... the agent has left and has been replaced by her new agent. So, I know him a little bit.

I don't know why that didn't crossed my mind. Anyway, I dropped him a line today, just to see whether we could get J. K. Rowling on the podcast and it's probably still a long shot. She's obviously very busy.

But, the message has been passed, so we'll have to see. That would, as I put in our other groups this morning and young Tom, as I won't call him, immediately came back and said, "Whoever follows that podcast episode has an act to follow."

And of course, you would have to go and interview her.



James Blatch: Yes. I would love to go and interview J. K. Rowling. We should say the email didn't come back from Joanne Rowling. It came back from a minion.

Mark Dawson: You're on first name terms?

James Blatch: Yeah. J, I call her. The J dog. Oh, no. I won't call her that. The J girl. That doesn't mean that ... it was one of her minions that emailed back to say that the message has been passed on. So, we'll see.

And we possibly have another route to another big author in the States we're going to pursue as well to get some big names on.

I'm always interested, it was one of the questions asked some of the bigger authors such as Karen Slaughter and Lee Child in the States is to what writing feels like when you've got millions of readers hanging off you know, your shirt tails. Coat tails?

And Hollywood waiting for the next script. And whether the fun goes out of it a little bit. But, they all sort of basically said that they keep their heads down and they focus on the bits that they enjoy which is the writing stories still.

Mark Dawson: You've never asked me that.

James Blatch: No, I have not.

But, you have had some Hollywood news this week, have you not?

Mark Dawson: Oh, I have yeah, yeah. The director, I can't ... it's very frustrating, I can't say too much about it. But, a director has now been approached and has agreed. They said that he's interested.

And the studio is working with his people to try and lock him down and get him into the project. And he is, he's a very well known director. He's been involved in one of the biggest film franchises in the world. I think I can



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probably say that. I won't say any more than that. But, he's a well known name.

The producers are very well known. I'm starting to almost feel like something might happen.

Again, I'm not buying properties in Malibu quite yet. But, it's not impossible that something might happen.

James Blatch: You could buy a bottle of Malibu.

Mark Dawson: I could probably just about stretch to that, yeah.

James Blatch: Well, that's very exciting. That would be amazing. And what would be great for us on the show, I think is to follow the story through you, vicariously of what happens, when, it gets closer to production.

Mark Dawson: Oh, yeah. Definitely, I'd love to do an episode.

It's been an interesting road so far from various people, very well known film producers suffering legal problems at the moment, who have been involved at one point or another to where we are now.

There's actually several podcasts that we could do about that. So, we'll see. As soon as the ink is dry and I've got the green light that I can talk about it, then I will.

James Blatch: Yeah, good. Okay.

We'll just mention that we're going to say hello to our new Patreon subscribers next week. So, if you want to be part of that batch, hear your name read out on the Self Publishing Show, go to Pateron.com/selfpublishingshow and you can support the podcast from as little as a dollar an episode.

We're delighted and thrilled whenever anyone does. You also get a little personal message from me now when you sign up. It's my new thing



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because we feel very grateful and we do work almost everyday. Little bits go into the show so, we're at sort of mid-afternoon in the UK now, Eight O'Clock tonight I'm doing an interview with somebody who's name escapes me and then I've got another interview I think, tomorrow-

Mark Dawson: James Patterson.

James Blatch: It's not James Patterson tonight. And so yeah, it keeps us going through all those times.

James Blatch: Now, here was an interview for today's show that I enjoyed very much because it was nice and easy. We were in Las Vegas at 20 Books in November last year and it's with a woman with an amazing name, called Kinga Jentetics. Now, she's actually I think, Kinga Jenetisch or I did say that correctly.

Mark Dawson: Jenetic, Jenetish probably.

James Blatch: Jenetish. Yeah, I think that's correct. Everyone says Jenetics and she has no ego about it. She says she's absolutely happy if people say Jenetics and it probably makes sense to have one pronunciation worldwide and it does make her sound either like a Bond villain, Kinga Jentetics or somebody who works in the bio, pharmaceutical sector.

But, she's not. She's from Hungary, from Budapest. And she and a couple of others founded a company called PublishDrive, which is an aggregator. So, a place where an author can upload their manuscript and cover and have the book distributed through multiple channels around the world. It's supposed to be a one-stop shop.

Now, it might sound familiar to you because we had Draft2Digital on the podcast a number of times before and this is definitely a company moving into that space.



It's a big player right from the beginning, they've got some money behind them, some investment money behind them and a very well organized CEO. And a very impressive CEO, I have to say Kinga is.

I met her in Vegas last, I actually had lunch with her last week in London and we're going to see, I think a bit more of her in the next year or so.

So, let's go back to my hotel room, which was rudely interrupted by a ridiculous light show out the window during this interview. But, let's hear from Kinga. Then Mark and I will have a quick chat off the back.

James Blatch: Kinga. Here we are. Why don't you start off by introducing yourself.

Kinga Jentetics: Okay. Hey guys, thanks for actually asking me to be in this podcast. So, my name is Kinga and I'm from PublishDrive. I'm one of the founders and the CEO there as well.

And we basically built a self publishing platform which is global. So, we actually are partnering with all the big guys like, Amazon, Apple Google. But, we have a lot of partners in China, in Europe, and all around the world basically.

We try to help all the authors out there to make sure that they have the smart tools, what they can use for their e-book distribution and sales and marketing.

And obviously to Indie publishers as well because we can see there are more and more who are actually are becoming small publishers.

James Blatch: Excellent. Okay, well, you've summed everything up. I'm intrigued to know a lot more about it all, Kinga. So, let's start with the idea.

Where did this all come from? Where did it start?

Kinga Jentetics: It's a funny story actually. I wanted to publish my Masters thesis which was about how music can influence the image of a country. So,



it's very much a niche topic. But you know, I published it on Amazon only at that time. And I could see that people were buying it. So, my master thesis which was very much a niche topic and it wasn't professionally edited. The cover design wasn't that good either, but still I got sales from Brazil, Mexico, US, so all around the world.

James Blatch: Of your thesis?

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah.

James Blatch: I didn't realize thesis had cover design and got sold.

I thought it was something you did to hand into a professor?

Kinga Jentetics: Well, actually it happened like that. I published it and then people were buying it so I could see that there is a market for that. And we researched what is happening on the market and I could see that there was not a good tool which could actually do global publishing.

And we started out from Hungary, from Europe. At that time, there was no Amazon available actually in Hungary. And still today, there is none.

James Blatch: You forget that some of the world doesn't have Amazon. You get so used to it.

Kinga Jentetics: Definitely.

James Blatch: And I say someone, well Chris Ducker, who is quite a prominent guy in the sort of digital spaces. Been living in the Philippines, I think?

And he said one of his number one things he was looking forward to coming back to Cambridgeshire is Amazon and Amazon Prime and stuff we get used to.

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah. Definitely.



James Blatch: So, because we're going to talk about being wide a little bit later and we should not forget that there's a lot of world out there that's not necessarily just at the end of an Amazon link. But, anyway. I'll let you go on.

Kinga Jentetics: Definitely. So, that's why we could see that especially in that part of the world, Google was very dominant and Apple and we actually started out to have those partnerships with these other guys.

And basically with our co-founders who I know from the university. They are technical people, Robert and Adam. Robert is on the data part. Adam is more on the engineering side.

We started out to work on PublishDrive because we could feel that we actually can build a platform which is truly global and which can integrate all the smart tools, what is needed to get published.

Because there is so much data, there is so much information, what you could get as an author and we couldn't find any good platform what can actually provide it for the authors.

James Blatch: Okay. So, just explain to me how it works. So, an author comes along, uses PublishDrive.

They upload their book or books to PublishDrive and you then, you're the aggregate. You then distribute the books to the various platforms.

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah. Basically it's like that. So, if you upload your book, you already have some smart tools integrated there.

We just released like a few weeks ago, a new tool which is supported by AI. It's a categorization tool. So, if you upload your book robot, which is called Savant, it's actually reading your book. Reading, like a robot can do that.

James Blatch: I'm sure robots read novels. They sit around doing nothing, wouldn't they?



Kinga Jentetics: And then they, based on the AI, what is built inside, they are suggesting some categories, what your book might fit into it. And then you can choose which one is the best for your book.

So, obviously, you make the decisions because that's what we believe in, that you as an author should be able to decide on what's happening with your books.

And you can select where you want to sell in our platform as well. So, you can select and pick and choose which platforms you want to sell on through PublishDrive. So, if you want to keep Amazon with your own account, you can do that. But you can switch to our platform as well.

For Amazon, for instance, you can keep all of your reviews, your ratings and everything like that. And then when it's done, we have a book review system built into the whole platform. Meaning that, we actually can flag content which shouldn't be published.

And we, if we see something which can be improved in your book, we will contact you. We just want to make sure that your content is in the best shape because that's what the readers want as well and that's how you can make more sales obviously.

When it's already in the green light then your book will be published in the different platforms what you chose you want to be distributed to. And you can track everything, what's happening with your book.

So, you can see when it was published on which platforms. You can track back the links as well which is important if you want to do some marketing as well. And then you can see real time sales data in the platform.

We provide you with all the data that we receive from the retailers in a concentrated way as well, so you can see the big picture. Which is the best selling country, which is the best selling platform for you? Which prices are working? So, all kind of data.



But, you can actually filter based on whatever you want to see. Whatever period, time period, whatever country, so you can dig into what's happening there as well.

James Blatch: Okay, so just to be clear, you upload the book to the various platforms and therefore you provide the data, you provide the dashboard for people to look at.

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah.

James Blatch: Which, presumably is one place to look at all your sales and affairs.

Kinga Jentetics: Yes. All the platforms in real time. We actually can show you the bigger guys who we actually get the real time data. But every month when your earnings reports are published, like the real earnings reports. You will actually see all the other platforms integrated into your sales dashboard too. So, you're able to see everything what's happening there.

James Blatch: Okay. And what about advertising? If people want to run ads themselves? So, like AMS for instance, they rely on you having access to your account most, well ... I say that. It's complicated and that is changing. But anyway, at the moment you go to your KDP bookshelf and click promote.

Kinga Jentetics: We actually have the option for Amazon, it's called Amazon advertising now, I think. I still get used to the AMS.

James Blatch: As we record this interview, I am very deep into trying to work out how the new platform works and it is slightly different.

There will come a point in the near future where you can promote, you can get through to the advertising council and promote the products even if you aren't the person who uploaded it.



Kinga Jentetics: Yes. But we actually can do that already, so. And we even released new pricing structure in our platform where the new sign-uppers, they actually can get \$50 Amazon advertising coupon as well, that they can spend with us.

And we provide back some report what's happened with those \$50 and what kind of results you could get on the book.

But in overall, we have marketing features because obviously that's what we see that is one of the biggest problems in the industry. Even though if you publish your books, how can you actually get more visible at the end, how can you get more readers who actually are buying your books? Obviously with the help of marketing.

So we work with the different retailer stores in a way that we know their marketing calendar for the year so we know in which month what kind of special promotions they are planning.

And that's why we are reaching out to our office and saying hey guys, there was Halloween recently so you actually can submit your horror titles or whatever you feel that it would fit into that topic. And we pick some of the titles which should be good in our opinion, obviously.

We submit those titles to the retail stores as well. And 90% of the case, they pick those titles to be featured at least for a few days, and obviously in that case, we can see that their sales are increasing.

For instance, during summertime we had one romance author, she was feature on iBooks US store ... Apple Books US store, sorry about that.

James Blatch: Yeah. Something else that's changed from here. By the time this interview's finished, everything else will be called something different, so ...

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah, definitely.



James Blatch: Just stick with what we know.

Kinga Jentetics: She was featured during summertime in the romance section, so this is a big deal for romance writers obviously, and she could get five times more sales, because of this featured position, so we were really happy that we could be part of that.

James Blatch: So these relationships that you've built up with Amazon and Apple to get a little edge for the people on PublishDrive?

Kinga Jentetics: Yes. We actually have not just Amazon and Apple, but we have Google Play as well, where we actually have some extractions with Kobo, obviously, with Barnes and Noble, and we don't Overdrive too, with Scribd.

Actually, everything is on our website, too, so you can see what kind of marketing features we have, and for which store, because that's what we believe in, to provide all kind of features and even more what you could get if you go directly with the stores.

James Blatch: When you think about authors, we should say we're in Vegas for 20 books Vegas, right?

Kinga Jentetics: Oh yeah, don't forget about it.

James Blatch: In this special set that I've built for us.

Kinga Jentetics: In this amazing set.

James Blatch: Where you are beautifully lit and no one can see me, 'cause I'm half bright and half dark, which is the opposite of when we recorded this interview before and you had a halo behind you.

Kinga Jentetics: Oh yeah, I looked blonde.

James Blatch: Embarrassingly, I was looking for a blonde woman.



Kinga Jentetics: Well, I hope it's okay that I'm not blonde.

James Blatch: I was shocked, because the light, the light's terrible to me, but perfect on you, which is the important thing. And down below us is this absolutely enormous hotel that we're sitting in, but the point that I'm getting to is that this is an exploding world. There are 700 odd authors here.

Kinga Jentetics: Oh yeah.

James Blatch: And your platform is for who? Which sort of author? Because some people want to have control.

Kinga Jentetics: Of course.

James Blatch: They're happy to upload everywhere themselves and monitor there, and there's a few dashboards around, there's reader links and book report, of course, all these dashboards, so who are you aiming at?

Kinga Jentetics: We have two types of authors currently. One of them is the total aspiring author who just started out, basically, and for them we have this pricing structure what everyone does in the industry, we take 10% cut after the revenue, and that works pretty well for them.

And we have the other type of authors, who are selling more and more, and we could see that those guys, they start to get some real burn when we take their 10% cut.

Obviously we are a business as well, so we know that there are many companies who just come and go in the industry, because they don't have a business model, or they don't know how to actually ...

James Blatch: You mean when things start selling, and when they start to see the 10%, they suddenly resent it.

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah.



James Blatch: Okay. Kind of lack of expectation.

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah. So for them we actually have a subscription model, which is like that, they pay a flat fee and they can get all the royalties that they could get going directly with the stores, and on top of that, they can get all kind of marketing features.

What I mentioned before, what is included in going directly with the stores as well, so is pretty important, and they can get this credit for the Amazon advertising as well.

We can see that most of our authors are coming from the States in both segments, and many of them are starting out like that, that yeah, they are still handling some of the stores on their own, like Amazon for instance, and it's totally up for them, so we actually say, the control is in your hands, we are not your publisher or whatever. Our contract it says as well, we are your distribution partner.

James Blatch: So you can come and go from time to time.

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah, you can come and go, and you actually can switch between the different pricing structures, too, so you can try out the subscription one for free in the first full calendar month, so if you upload your book before the full calendar month starts it's free, and then afterwards for a full calendar month as well it's still totally free for you.

You can try it out, and if it works for you, then you will obviously see the numbers, so you can decide whether you want to stay on that. You can switch back to the royalty or revenue share model as well anytime, and you can withdraw your titles as well, if you don't want to be on PublishDrive anymore, because you are not happy. But thank God we don't see too many of them.

James Blatch: And I guess the one person this doesn't work for is somebody who's in KU.



Kinga Jentetics: Oh yeah, sure, if you are in KU, then we cannot work with you right now. We actually had many authors who were starting out working with us went to KU for 90 days, and then they came back because they said that for them, going wide is actually working better.

So it depends on what kind of authors they are out, and what kind of books they have, what kind of genres they are writing, because for some of them, KU works beautifully, and it's the best marketing tool for them, and for some of them going wide is the just the other option and the only option, what can make them to become a full time writer.

James Blatch: One thing I think you probably would be an advocate of for the wide reason is the reaching to other parts of the world, and we talked about Hungary in the beginning, should say that you're from Hungary yourself.

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah, I'm from Hungary.

James Blatch: So your perspective is a little bit different from somebody brought up in the United States surrounded by easy access to all these digital platforms, you're in one of the countries in the world where it's been a little more difficult, and in fact even Australia.

The point I'm getting to is that right from the beginning, this platform is about global reach, right?

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah.

James Blatch: It's about getting to places that a lot of the traditional platforms don't get to. You mentioned China at the beginning as well.

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah, we actually have more Chinese partners running the platform and we are working on to have even more, because we consider this a huge market to step foot in, and it's getting, I think there are 500 million readers in China who actually can buy, and they buy English language books, so it's like, wow.



James Blatch: So China, how about India?

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah, India is in our platform as well, and we can see that in India, Google Play books is pretty strong, because 80% of the smart phone users are actually Android users, it is a huge amount of people there who are actually having a device where Google Play books is already preinstalled.

So obviously it's a no brainer that they are looking for content, and obviously in these markets different kind of contents are selling well, so as they are emerging markets, a lot of non fiction is selling quite good there, and even how to learn English better and these kind of reference books, they go really well.

James Blatch: Business guides and things like that.

Kinga Jentetics: Business guides, yes, but still, the traditional fiction type of books, they are still the best sellers, but we can see that the ratio is a bit different than in other markets.

James Blatch: And that's a really optimistic note to sound, because we ... Again, 20 books, a lot of people here, and people looking around the room saying, everyone's, it's far too competitive, but the truth is the world is growing massively.

I was in Africa not that long ago, and the emerging middle class in Africa, they were suddenly driving BMWs, going to nice restaurants, buying thrillers to read and romance books to read, is only going one way, the market over there.

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah. I read somewhere recently that in China, every day, there are two people who become millionaires.

James Blatch: They've gotta buy a book, haven't they?

Kinga Jentetics: They should.



James Blatch: Whatever book they bought, I want to read it.

Kinga Jentetics: Well, we don't judge on that part.

James Blatch: Exactly. Okay, so you're aiming yourself at somebody who either, it's convenient for them and there's plenty of people frankly who balk at some of the complexities.

I upload our SPF books, and it is a faff, going through that whole thing, and doing it once, and seeing aggravated is great. You do have competitors in this market.

Kinga Jentetics: Of course.

James Blatch: And of course our friends from Draft2Digital are here as well. How do you differentiate yourself from them?

Kinga Jentetics: We definitely have more markets where we are breaking, and more stores included in the platform as well.

We have better royalty rates, too, which is obviously a good thing, even in the revenue share model, but if you go with a subscription, which is like a \$100 per month fee, and you could get all the royalties what you could get going directly, it's pretty good, it's pretty good deal for the authors who are selling more than \$1000 per month, basically.

And then we have a lot of smart tools integrated, including the analytics of the sales data, but we have these smart tools which have you improve on the meta data as well.

What we can see that it's working beautifully for many of the authors. We even have one person dedicated for that, she is based in London, and she was working before with Pottermore, and she basically knows everything about meta data, so if you need some help how to improve that, we actually can get you introduced to that person.



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And then our support team is awesome, so that well we can see and hear from people that they really like that we are there for the authors and we are supporting them, even though there are some challenges, because obviously there will be always challenges.

But they like that we are partnering with them on the long term, and if there is any kind of new ideas how we can improve on the platform, we are looking for that to receive all those feedback, because that's how we can improve, and that's how we can build a better product.

James Blatch: And a bit of competition is good. We actually came up in the lift with Mark from D2D.

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah. And actually, another thing, that we are more getting features integrated.

James Blatch: Okay.

Kinga Jentetics: I just had a chat before with one interviewer as well, and he mentioned that having any kind of marketing features in this industry is totally a differentiator, because that's why people usually don't go with an aggregator to the different stores, besides having the 10% revenue share, what they have to give up on, that they don't have any marketing option throughout an aggregator, so they cannot have the kindle daily and monthly deals, they don't have many promotional deals with Kobo, for instance.

We have all of these included, and on top of that we have these featured positions as well, we've been working on, and the Amazon advertising as well, which is something what we are exploring right now.

James Blatch: I'm interested in the beginning of this story. You're CEO of a global company that's growing in a very growing space if you like, independent authors.



How did this all happen? You said you wrote your thesis and you suddenly realized there was interest in this, but how did you turn that into a functioning company?

Kinga Jentetics: It was a long journey.

James Blatch: Not a quick answer to this one.

Kinga Jentetics: No, not a quick answer.

James Blatch: But if you could make it quick for me.

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah, I'm trying my best. So basically we started out three and a half years ago for the London Book Fair and then that's the point when we launched the product and we got our first international customers.

James Blatch: And how many of you were there then?

Kinga Jentetics: We were four of us.

James Blatch: Four of you. Okay.

Kinga Jentetics: And I was the only person who was full time, so this is still very early on.

James Blatch: So this is your baby.

Kinga Jentetics: I'd say it's our baby. Everyone is contributing a lot to that. And then we started out working with the international customers, and we even got the trusted partner nomination of Apple as well, so we are listed on their site.

James Blatch: So that was a big moment for you.

Kinga Jentetics: Of course, yeah, it was, and it still is. And then we got invited by Google for their program as well, and that was really good,



because in San Francisco we could actually experience the whole start up world as well the tech world, and obviously we could meet all these really important guys in the different spaces of the industry.

And we learned a lot during this whole thing, and we met, even that was the point when we actually organized our first meet up in San Francisco.

James Blatch: Okay.

Kinga Jentetics: So that was pretty cool, there were many authors who just arrived and we had only one week to organize it, so that was a very random idea, but it was awesome.

And then basically we had another milestone when we flipped our European company to the States, so this year we are already operating from the US company, and now we actually are 20 of us, and we are spreading all around the world. We have our team back in Budapest more on the engineering side, and the operational side, then we have many other colleagues here in the States.

James Blatch: So you're a US registered company now.

Kinga Jentetics: Yes.

James Blatch: And you're privately owned, you own the show.

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah.

James Blatch: So why that choice, why register in the US, was it tax efficient?

Kinga Jentetics: Not really. Because most of our clients came from the States and we could actually see that we wanted to have the safest legal environment for them as well, what they are used to, and when it's about copyrights, obviously, the States is the best place to be.



We could see that this is the way to go to make sure that we actually can be a long term partnership, and even on some of the operational side, we actually could make some scalable solutions as well regarding taxation, for instance.

And another thing, actually was really good for us, that many of our partners, Apple, Google, and these guys, they were happy about this change as well, so we could get more features for our authors, because they could see that we are getting serious, and we are actually a growing company who take themselves seriously.

James Blatch: And you've continued to grow.

Kinga Jentetics: Yes. Hope so. Especially that last month we had many new features that we released, and we could see that many authors, that was our record month, actually, that many authors just joined the platform.

James Blatch: So new authors joining.

Kinga Jentetics: Yes. New authors who actually uploaded books as well, we had many thousand of books in the platform just in the last couple of weeks and we could see that they are really exploring whilst there.

Many of our previous authors, they actually switched on more channels as well. And yeah, we could get a lot of requests for the subscription model too because they are pretty much interested in that. Because it's good for the authors who actually are selling more, so.

James Blatch: What targets do you have?

Kinga Jentetics: What we want to achieve?

James Blatch: Yeah.

Kinga Jentetics: One of the things that we want to do is help more on the marketing side for the authors, because this is really important and then to



have everywhere, in terms of helping on the print books, the audio, then translations as well.

So this is the vision basically, to be a long term partner for the authors and to make sure that they actually can own their copyright but still make the full out of their books and out of their stories.

We can see that in the States, we have more authors joining us, but we are very much proud that we have customers coming from all around the world, so authors sign up to publish right from more than 60 countries already, so it's pretty awesome and we like that.

And we have more than 40 languages in the platform too. Obviously, most of our catalog is in English and we are happy about that too, but we even have some Chinese books which were best selling books as well, so it's been pretty cool to see that.

James Blatch: In terms of numbers of authors joining, you must have sat down a couple of years ago and did your predictions and what you hoped for, what was realistic.

Has it succeeded your expectations, are you on track?

Kinga Jentetics: We are on track and even for this year I think we are on track and we want to make sure that we actually can grow this community, so we have plans on that part too.

We launched an author's success corner on our new website where, there is Adam, the author success coach and all of the content, that we are doing which are free to access.

We have webinars, we have blog, we have videos about different stages, different stages of the publishing journey because we can see this is something what many of the authors, they don't know about that, how you have to design your cover, what kind of method of improvement you can use, so there are many things what we can cover.



We have some pretty ambitious goals for next year, in terms of how many authors we want to have in the platform and how many books we actually want to have. And hopefully, with all the new features what we are releasing, it will actually happen.

James Blatch: And what's it like for you, 'cause your life must have transformed with this?

It must have been a very intense period, the first 12 months, trying to get things going?

Kinga Jentetics: Oh yeah sure. You can imagine that, especially starting out from a small country and being a woman founder. There are a lot of challenges that you have to tackle.

But our team is awesome and I'm really happy that we actually could grow our team, not just in numbers but geographically as well. And our team is so diverse, from different countries, with different backgrounds and different cultures and I really like that.

That's in our DNA, so being global means not just being geographically global but we actually have inclusivity and both in our team, both in our company structure, and both in our author base. And that's what we believe in, that it should be like that in the future too.

James Blatch: It's great Kinga and what a great inspiration also to young girls. I think my daughter who's 14, 15, I'd love her to see you.

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah, I'd love to.

James Blatch: A CEO in your twenties, I'm guessing you're in your twenties?

Kinga Jentetics: It would be great to actually meet her and this is one of the things what I am actually very passionate about, to actually empower young



girls and women to start a career, either in tech or just in any other field or any other entrepreneurial journey because that's what the world needs.

That's what I can see that women, they have a lot of great ideas, they are so passionate and sometimes they just need another kick to make sure that they can start out, but they are brilliant and I think in the future we will see more women, who actually can succeed in many other fields.

James Blatch: I hope so, and it is happening and a kick or an inspiration to see someone like yourself, good example, great example.

It's an exciting thing. I mean your drive to get more authors, where do you principally draw them from? Do you advertise yourself? I mean obviously, you do the circuits, the conferences and podcasts and so on.

Is there a strategy in place for you?

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah sure there is a strategy. So in overall, well we can see that obviously going to these offline conferences is really good to build up the brand itself.

But we actually advertise ourselves on social media too, we partner up with some of the writer organizations too, to make sure that we actually can partner with them in many other fields or even conferences.

And yeah, we do a lot of content, so we want to make sure that there is a lot of freely available content, in webinars or in blog pods for our potential authors who can benefit from Publishdrive.

Even now or in the future at some point, so we know that the authors who are selling the writing process, right now we cannot help that much, but we are there if they have questions because we had many authors who went through all these processes already. And even in our team, we have many writers too, so we actually know what's happening and we can help them to get through the writer's block if they have any, or any kind of author's burnout too, because these are the challenges what everyone is facing with



and yeah, we are there to make sure that they can tackle that and they can go through all these kind of challenges.

James Blatch: Great. Well you'd better tell people where they can find you.

Kinga Jentetics: Yes. We have a website, it's called publishdrive.com.

James Blatch: Good mate, yeah.

Kinga Jentetics: We have actually a Facebook group too. It's called Write more worry less, self publishing with Publishdrive. And we have a Twitter page and I'm personally active on Instagram, but the company is active on Instagram as well.

I can be reached out to at any time too so, I'm happy to chat with anyone who has questions because that's how I learn a lot too and today I'm so happy to be here at the 20 Books 50K conference as well, because I could chat to so many authors who are really great in marketing and they already sell hundred thousands of copies of their books.

They are pretty curious about the subscription model too, because this is something good for them and especially about the going wide aspect, this is something they feel they have to do because they want to take next step in their writing and publishing career.

James Blatch: My final question. Explain how the pricing models work.

Kinga Jentetics: We have two models, one of them is the revenue share, the 10% cut and the-

James Blatch: So that's 10% of the royalties, so you get your 70% from Amazon and you take 10% of that then?

Kinga Jentetics: Yes, yeah and then the other one is a subscription pricing, which is basically, you pay \$100 per month, which is yeah in my mind, it's like 5p that price.



James Blatch: Yeah, two beers here, yeah.

Kinga Jentetics: That's what I always. Yeah that's true. And you get all the royalties what you would get going directly with the stores and all the marketing features and if you sign up now you can get free trial month, a full calendar month and a \$50 Amazon coupon as well, for advertising.

James Blatch: You can go backwards and forwards through the pricing level?

Kinga Jentetics: Sure.

James Blatch: So it's a fairly simple mathematical equation, depending on how many books you sell, as to whether it's going to be the subscription model.

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah we even show a calculator for you.

James Blatch: So you can see, great.

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah and we usually say that if you sell more than 1000 books per month, then the subscription will work for you better.

James Blatch: There's effectively a cap on the fee, you're ever going to pay.

Kinga Jentetics: Yes.

James Blatch: Which also caps your revenue of course.

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah it caps, but it's okay.

James Blatch: That's right. You've got a spreadsheet and you've done the predictions.

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah we have-

James Blatch: I'm not pointing this out to you for the first time?



Kinga Jentetics: Yeah we have venture capitals in our company, so.

James Blatch: Yeah okay.

Kinga Jentetics: We had to do our maths.

James Blatch: Yes, okay. Okay, that's interesting. So you've brought me to one final, final, question.

My third final question is the funding at the beginning. So you did get VC money and investors?

Kinga Jentetics: Yes, so we did get money. First of all we got money from an investor back in Europe, then we got some money from Google, then we got an investment from partly US and European base, to be venture capital last December.

And since then we actually are growing quite fast, so we are happy that we could actually finally close last year, because this way we could grow much faster in terms of the product and in terms of the business as well.

James Blatch: You could finally close?

Kinga Jentetics: The deal.

James Blatch: Oh, close the deal. So they've bought a piece of it.

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah, basically it's investors.

James Blatch: Yes. Like Dragon's Den.

Kinga Jentetics: Yeah, we don't do ICO's where you don't have to give up on your equity.

James Blatch: No, no. It's a shame, I should invent that, yeah. Good. Okay, look, Kinga, I've put you through the mill twice, 'cause we did this interview online, now you've done it in my Las Vegas studio, so.



Kinga Jentetics: It's amazing. You even got some show for me.

James Blatch: That was all put on for you.

Kinga Jentetics: It was only for me I know, I know.

James Blatch: We'll go and have a beer now and we can watch it close up. Thank you so much indeed and yeah, we'll watch Publishdrive.

Obviously it's going nowhere but up at the moment so it's a good news story.

Kinga Jentetics: Thank you very much for inviting me to your show.

James Blatch: So there is Kinga Jenetics speaking to me in Vegas last year. The company's just going through it's next funding round at the moment and there's not doubt it feels to me, Mark, this is a company with an upward trajectory at the moment.

It's difficult to second guess and predict where things are going to end up, but it sort of feels also like a maturity, part of the maturity in the industry that bigger, well organized companies are coming along.

Mark Dawson: Yeah it's certainly true that they've been going now for a few years and a few people have come to the party so Draft2Digital obviously, the obvious analog for Publishdrive have been around for, I'm going to say five years, it might even be longer than that now, so they've been around for a long time and it's good, we've got Smashwords as well.

I'm not a big fan of Smashwords for a number of reasons, but I do respect what they've done, Smashwords and Mark Coker have been around for a very long time, so real pioneers in that sense.

And Publishdrive coming along, offering authors another option, another way to get their books into stores that might otherwise be beyond them and offering interesting deals as you mentioned, so it's good. More competition is better than less obviously.



James Blatch: The pricing model, which is a surprise. I think Draft2Digital probably are 10% of the royalty, so you get paid your 70% by Amazon or whoever the end retailer is and they'll take 10% of that in return for organizing all of those placements right now.

Publishdrive do the same thing, but they have a cap, so you can subscribe for \$100 a month and then that is it. You pay those \$1200 a year and you pay no more.

Now for small authors, it makes sense to be on 10%, but once you're earning, in fact I did say to Kinga, I thought this, only the other day I said to her, "Have you worked out at what point it makes sense to be subscribed?", and she said, "Yes, we've done the calculations, it's \$1200 a year income", and I'm thinking, "Yes, that does make sense."

Of course, once you're earning \$1200 a year, above that, it's capped. So for you Mark, if you wanted to use an aggregator, that would make a significant difference in your casting around for where you're going to go. If you're earning \$100,000 a month and your royalty for that particular aspect is capped at \$100, you can see why there, it was quite controversial, even within her company I think, when they brought that in.

I've spoken to a couple of other people in the industry who've said to me, they've raised eyebrows, let's put it that way, with this pricing strategy. But for the big players, it seems like, it's quite I guess, a commercially aggressive move we'd call it.

Mark Dawson: Yeah and they've got to be offering something. They're a newcomer taking on two established companies, they have to try and differentiate themselves in some way and this is a pretty good way to do it.

You know in the same way that I had drinks with someone from Apple last year and one of the things I suggested was, if they wanted to really compete with Amazon, a really great way to do that would be to pay more in terms or take more, less sorry as their commissions. So give authors 80%



rather than 70% and you might well see authors thinking, "Well that makes the KU thing slightly less attractive if I can get more money from saving money I'm giving to the store."

So it's a good, sensible strategy to differentiate themselves. Whether it's sustainable long term, hard to say, but I applaud them for doing something a little bit different.

James Blatch: It's another good thing about the whole Indie world, you've got tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands of authors now on the planet.

That's a lot of individual customers who can exert a lot of commercial pressure and power and the old days of their being just five companies with a very small selection of authors who got selected, I guess the commercial pressures just weren't quite the same as they are today.

Mark Dawson: No definitely not no, there's lots of different ways to get your books out these days, so I'm all for more people coming into the market.

James Blatch: Good, okay. Well Kinga and the Publishdrive team will be at the London Book Fair in April, so if you're there, you can come and meeting Kinga, we'll sit down I think for a few minutes Mark and have a look at the platform.

If you don't use, you have used Draft2Digital in the past, you haven't used Publishdrive, and I'll be interested to know what you think of the dashboard and so on, as somebody uses these things so we'll have a look at that.

James Blatch: Good, excellent, well that's it for this week. It's been a pleasure as always, talking to the bearded wonder.

Mark Dawson: He's very beardy at the moment, he needs to go to the beard trimming shop to have a little bit of a trim.

James Blatch: Didn't you get a beard trimmer for Christmas?



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Mark Dawson: Mr Dyer's not available today.

James Blatch: Young Tom'll do it.

Mark Dawson: Poor young Tom.

James Blatch: We haven't told young Tom the full extent of his duties with SPF yet, so.

Mark Dawson: No, he doesn't know quite what he's signed up for.

James Blatch: No, no, he doesn't. Good, okay, that's it, you can get the full show notes of course at selfpublishingshow.com and don't forget you can support us on Patreon at [.com/selfpublishingshow](https://www.patreon.com/selfpublishingshow). We would love you to be here this time next week, in the meantime have a great week writing and selling. We'll speak to you in seven days. Bye-bye-

Mark Dawson: Bye-bye.

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