

BLOG TO BOOK

Pros, Cons & Considerations



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The blog-to-book concept came up at our first School Night Writers' Group online meeting in February, so I thought I would jot down some of the things I learned about blogging to book from the writers' conferences I've attended.

Blogging to book means that as you are writing your book, you are posting sections or chapters onto a blog. Future readers of your book will get drawn into the story or the topic and ultimately be beside themselves with anticipation, buying up so many copies that you're an overnight sensation.

That's the idea, anyway. And while it may not be the Cinderella story that it's claimed to be, blogging your book can help you build a fan base and generate interest in your book.

CONS

Not everyone is a fan of the blog-to-book concept. Jane Friedman, who writes about writers and publishing, in an article titled ["Please Don't Blog Your Book: 4 Reasons Why,"](#) points out these negatives:

1. Blog writing is not the same as book writing.

Because blogs are written for the Internet, they are presumably written with Search Engine Optimization in mind (although mine isn't, but only because I'm lazy), while books don't have to worry about that. The flow and tone of a book is different from a blog.

2. Blogs can make for very bad books.

She points out that "just dumping" your blog into book format without any further editing or tweaking is a mistake.

3. It's harder for narrative works to get picked up by book deals.

I'm not clear on what she means by this, but I think she's referring not to someone who has a book idea and wants to

figure out how to blog it first, but to someone who has a blog and wants to get it published as a book.

4. *People who like books don't necessarily like blogs.*

If your book is written like a blog, you're going to disappoint a chunk of your readers. Friedman uses herself as an example: I read blogs all day, she says, so when I finally get to sit and read a book, I don't want to read another blog.

NOW FOR SOME PROS FROM A PRO

Blogging to book has advantages.

- ***You can build a following for your book before it's launched.***
- ***You can kill two birds with one stone and check the "blog" box at the same time you're writing your book.***
- ***Blogging parts of your book allows you to throw something out there and see how it's received.***
- ***If you're a book writer, blogging can help you build your platform, grow an online presence, and establish yourself as an expert.***

Nina Amir, whose expertise I had the benefit of hearing at the San Francisco Writers' Conference two years in a row, says [blogging is one of the best ways of marketing your book.](#)

Amir refers clients to Austin Kleon's book [Show Your Work: 10 Ways to Share Your Creativity and Get Discovered.](#) Blogging might be a 21st century phenomenon, but sharing your work and widening your audience is not. As writers, we're lucky to live at a time when a new audience is right around the corner and you can be sharing your writing as fast as it takes you to sign up for a Wordpress account and hit "Publish" (which is about 10 minutes).

BUT AREN'T YOU GIVING AWAY YOUR BOOK FOR FREE?

If you put parts of your book out there online, are you giving away the milk for free and then expecting people to buy the cow? Who's going to buy your book if they've already read most of it online for free on your blog?

The reality is, unless you're Stephen King or a Kardashian, you're not going to have enough blog followers for this to be a problem. Blogging to book could, however, start to gather together fans of your book before it has hit Amazon. And that's a good thing.

Blogging to book stirs up excitement about your book. It gets people interested in the story or topic and will generate interest and anticipation, and make them more excited to make that book purchase.

TIPS ON BLOGGING TO BOOK

From everything I've read, here are some top tips on blogging to book:

1. Blog the book, don't publish the blog.

I ended up doing the exact opposite of this, but it's a one-shot deal. It makes more sense to say, "Hey, I've got this great idea for a book. Now, how can I work parts of it into my blog?"

2. Blog 80% of your book and hold back a key 20%.

Eighty percent seems to be the magic number. Any more and you've effectively given away too much. Any less and you might not generate maximum interest.

3. Sprinkle in some great content

Don't just blog your book's content and call it a day. Think about what your readers like and give them some great content. If you write historical fiction, write a blog post about a new discovery about the time period, or review a TV show or movie that takes place at the same time. Know your book's audience and make your blog fit their interests.

4. Keep an open dialogue with your readers

That's what blogging is all about! In pre-Internet times, our favorite authors were distant and we had no real connection with them. Through your blog, you can reveal things about your personal life that will make you so much more accessible to your readers. You can also use your blog readers as a focus group. How cool would it be to have your favorite author take your input about a book she's writing? And readers *love* to hear about the writer's life. Talk to them about what your day is like, how you work in your writing routine, and where you find inspiration.

5. The blog lives on after your book is published

After you've blogged through your first book, keep your blog as a way of connecting with your readers. And then when you're ready to write that second book, you have an already established audience to help you along the way.