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## **Meet the Masterminds: Angela Hoy on Online Publishing**

Angela Hoy is one of the most successful self-publishers on the Internet. A former television reporter, Hoy started publishing her own magazine, *The Write Markets Report*, in 1997. She has since rewritten industry standards for electronic publishing and is frequently interviewed and quoted in Internet and business magazines.

Hoy is co-owner of Booklocker.com and WritersWeekly.com, which is the highest-circulation freelance writing ezine in the world, reaching more than 67,000 writers each week. She is also a well-known on-line author. Her books include *How to Write, Publish & Sell E-Books*, *How to Publish and Promote Online* and *Buzz Your Zine*. MCNews asked Hoy to tell us all about on-line writing and publishing. Her insights and tips are practical and accessible, and her enthusiasm is contagious.

### **MCNews: Let's start with the ABC's. What is an electronic, or ebook, and what are the benefits of publishing electronically compared to traditional publishing?**

**Hoy:** An electronic book is published in electronic format rather than on paper, and it's distributed electronically, either via download, email attachment, on a CDROM or other electronic medium.

Ebooks are beneficial to readers because they provide instant delivery. You don't even have to find your car keys to buy one. And, they are typically less expensive than their print counterparts. Ebooks are also searchable, so you don't have to flip back and forth looking for what you need.

Another advantage to ebooks is their potential to be interactive. Readers can take a self-assessment quiz, for example, or follow links to other web sites that are related to what they are reading.

Ebooks are beneficial to writers and publishers too because there are no printing and shipping expenses, and it is much easier to sell ebooks to a global audience than printed books. The profit margin on ebooks is much higher.

### **MCNews: Writing an ebook sounds a little daunting to the non-writer. Is it hard to write an ebook? What's the best way to get started?**

**Hoy:** Non-fiction ebooks must be concise, to the point. People who read non-fiction ebooks want the facts and they want them now. That's why non-fiction ebooks sell better than fiction--instant delivery! Sales of fiction ebooks aren't great. They sell better in formats compatible with hand-held devices. This allows readers to carry their novels with them. Nobody wants to read a novel sitting at their desk, looking at a computer screen, but people will read non-fiction that way.

A good way to get started, of course, would be to read my books! A new author should also join some on-line writing discussion groups to learn from other writers.

**MCNews: To get started, what professional resources are generally needed?**

**Hoy:** It all depends on how entrepreneurial the writer is. Even for those who write very well, I always recommend a professional editor. Some writers may need professional help on the design elements of the book like the cover. But, many writers are quite adept at creating their own cover art. Authors also need a way to sell and distribute books. They can sell ebooks from their own sites, or hook up with an on-line publisher like BookLocker.com.

BookLocker.com takes no rights away from authors and pays the highest royalties in the industry. However, we don't accept all books. In fact, we accept less than 10% of those submitted. We do recommend another publisher with an impeccable reputation for those that we must reject.

**MCNews: In your experience, what types of business books tend to sell best?**

**Hoy:** Non-fiction, how-to-make-money books and how-to-start-a-business books sell the best.

**MCNews: There's been a lot of press about widespread copyright infringement of ebooks and other on-line material. Is this true? And, if so, what are the most secure forms of distribution?**

**Hoy:** It's not true. In fact, we only know of one case where a book was stolen from one of our authors. If authors worry too much about something that will probably never happen, they're shooting themselves in the pocketbook.

We utilize security features in Adobe Acrobat that prevent cutting and pasting from our books. Yes, someone can email that book to a friend or neighbor, but what were the chances of that friend or neighbor actually buying the book anyway? If I didn't publish for fear of copyright infringement, I'd already be out of business.

**MCNews: You've written about generating "buzz" for an author's work, particularly electronic newsletters. What first steps should new authors consider to generate buzz for a new ebook?**

**Hoy:** The most difficult challenge for any author today is choosing a publishing option and then generating enough buzz to get the work noticed by potential readers. The first step is to create a website if the author does not already have one. Then, publish an ezine on your topic. This enables you to keep in touch with interested readers on a regular basis.

Put a link to your book and a brief description of it in your email signature. Check your email package for how to do this. Every email you send out then becomes buzz for your book. Also, think of something of value to offer for free (a short ebook perhaps) to get people to visit your site and subscribe to your ezine. Even if access is free to your ezine, people will be much more interested if you offer a short, free ebook.

I tell people to think of the Internet as a "global intercom," a way to buzz your readers and let them know about your products or services. Make lists of all the ways you can think of to generate buzz, and make promotion of your work as creative as writing it was.

**MCNews: If an author was sitting down to begin their first ebook, what's the most important advice you would pass along?**

**Hoy:** Don't try to rip off readers just because you're only selling an "electronic file."

One example is to call a 12-page document an “ebook.” Another is to format the document with humongous fonts and huge margins to make it look longer than it is. If you don’t ensure your reputation remains outstanding, you will fail. We see it happen all the time.

Hire an editor. It’s always worth the price. Whatever publishing route you choose, hiring a professional editor is one of the most important investments you can make in your work. Be sure to get references and check the editor’s credentials carefully.

In addition to publishing your book electronically, publish it in print-on-demand (POD) format too. Giving readers a choice sells more books, and it’s so inexpensive to go POD.

Visit Angela Hoy’s web sites at [www.BookLocker.com](http://www.BookLocker.com) and [www.WritersWeekly.com](http://www.WritersWeekly.com).