

Boost Sales Utilizing Author Websites

by **Stephanie Bond**

Author websites run the gamut from simple to spectacular, and what a great sales tool for you the bookseller! Want to know when the author's next book is coming out? The author's own website will probably be more informative than the publisher's website or your ordering system. Need to know all the titles in a particular author series? The author's website will probably have them at-a-glance—especially helpful if she wrote them for multiple publishers in multiple formats.

Has the author ever written under another name? If she did, it was likely for multiple publishers or defunct lines, so your best source will be her website.

Are her books available in large print, audio, or in electronic format? Since those subsidiary rights are usually parceled out to various secondary publishers, the author website might be your best one-stop source.

Has she ever contributed to anthologies that might not be listed under her name (usually the anthology is listed only under the lead author's name)? Check her website.

Does she live or is she touring in your town or near your bookstore? Check her website.

Other information to look for on author websites that will make your customers happy: reading group guides, offers for free promotional materials, printable bookmarks and bookplates, contests, excerpts, scenes/material cut from the final book, and an e-mail link. Don't be afraid to e-mail an author if your reading group has a burning question—your customers will love you if they think you have a direct line to their favorite authors!

Romance authors realize that their readers are curious—indeed, some are *insatiable*—about an author's books! With the proliferation of used bookstores, titles have a longer lifecycle than before. In response, more and more romance authors are making their websites a repository for their career body of work, including information for multiple audiences: readers, booksellers, the media, and even subsidiary rights agents. Logon and take advantage of all the information available through author websites to keep your romance customers well informed!

For a comprehensive, alphabetical list of links to hundreds of romance author websites, go to http://www.rwanational.org/author_websites.cfm.

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