Apple Made Its Decision. My Turn.

By Holly Lisle

Rotten Apple

Apple rejected **How To Think Sideways Lesson 6: How To Discover (Or Create) Your Story's Market**.
Not because of links to Amazon this time.

Because of content.

Lesson 6 includes my "Amazon River" technique, in which I show students how I use a couple of useful bits of Amazon's website software and the Amazon database to figure out how to find alternative genres for their books if they aren't having any luck selling it in the genre they wrote it for. I've successfully used this technique to place both TALYN and MIDNIGHT RAIN.

This is not just essential information for writers publishing or hoping to publish commercially—it's also the fastest way for self-pubbers to find potential new markets for their existing work.

And there is no other website in the world on which you can do

this as quickly, as completely, or as successfully.

So now it's down to me.

I cannot sell PART of the course on Apple. So **How To Think Sideways** will not appear on the iBookstore. Neither will **How To Revise Your Novel**.

But I also will not deal with this sort of head-up-ass behavior from a *distributor*. You don't tell someone "The problem is the live links," and then, when that person has complied with your change request and removed the live links, turn around and say, "No, no. The problem is the CONTENT. You can't mention Amazon in your lesson.

This is not professional behavior from a professional market.

And cold moment of truth here—you cannot write a writing course that includes information on publishing and self-publishing and NOT mention Amazon. It's the place where your writers are going to make about 90% of their money.

So I'm pulling ALL my work from the iBookstore today. I apologize to iBookstore fans. I tried. Hard.

But I'm done.

Previous Posts in This Discussion

- Crippling A Lesson: An Apple iBookstore Ethical and Practical Issue
- Uncrippling the Lesson: The Aftermath
- Things Don't Look Good for My Future With Apple

Same morning, three hours later…

All my self-pubbed books are now out of the iBook store. The work by me that is still there is commercially published, and

I cannot do anything about its presence or absence.

But, for writers, especially those involved in or considering self-publishing, I can no longer recommend Apple as a professional distributor. Requiring no links to a competing website was borderline…but I complied because I wanted to keep the courses available for students who could not get them any other way.

Requiring the removal of actual lesson content, however, is unacceptable. No, it isn't censorship. Again, only governments have the armies that allow them to censor.

It is simply an unbelievably stupid business decision, since the people buying the lesson would have to pay for it BEFORE they read the content, and would not abandon Apple because of the content.

The big markets that meet my standards for good distribution practices for self-publishers are now down to Amazon.com and Barnes&Noble.com.

I don't yet have anything up on XinXii.com, so cannot yet report on the quality of service of the site. It does have an interesting "Pay on Demand" feature that kicks in once you've hit their sales threshold.

I'm backlogged getting lessons set up on my own site, Amazon, and B&N, but will start testing XinXii.com once I catch my breath.

I'm deeply disappointed by the loss of Apple as a viable market. I know a lot of folks hate the company. I loved it, though—and recent decisions on this issue as well as the issue of sandboxing in the next OS make me realize it's working hard at making itself a company I won't be able to support.

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