

The “Couldn’t Get WordPress To Let Me In” Responses

By Holly Lisle

Oh, boy. I’m not putting names on these because they were sent to me privately and not all of them had the “couldn’t get WordPress to work” comment.

	SIDE NOTE: I host my weblog myself, on my own site, which means your WordPress.com ID won’t work here. You need to create an ID for this weblog. To do that, just click the LOGIN link to the right, and when you get to the login box, click the link underneath that says “Register.”	

Along with the many public posts, there have been some private e-mails. Some have been cautionary:

“My gut tells me that it isn’t a good idea. Even the big-name fiction publications like Analog and Asimov’s don’t sell all -that- well anymore. The system you’ve concocted works very much in the author’s interests—but I don’t know if people would be able to stomach a magazine full of serials.

When people buy something, they want the whole thing—they don’t want a small piece, they don’t want a chunk. They want something whole. Admittedly there are many series books—but each book in itself contains a whole story. I don’t think it’d work.

I don’t like to smash things, least of all dreams, but that’s

an expensive venture to undertake, and if there's no interest in it, there's no point in it.

And:

Personally, I can't see myself keeping track of five story lines in my head at the same time, and having to wait for two months for the next installment. I do like short novels, but I like to be able to read them in a short burst. So put me down as a "No, thanks."

Some have offered solid problems that need to be dealt with:

*1) With regard to incentive to buying back issues. Say you have an AMAZING story that has been running for a while. A new subscriber picks up the latest issue, reading the latest installment of the story, and BAM, they read spoilers... It's almost like turning to halfway through a new book by your favourite author, isn't it? Is that reader *really* going to want to pay to go back and read the earlier sections now that the story is spoiled for them?*

2) The \$1 pay-per-vote; is this on TOP of the subscription fee? Or does the sub include a built-in vote?

3) Filesharing. I wouldn't say this is a concern if you're offering an electronic edition of an entire completed book, because even if someone buys the e-book, they will likely go get the real book for their shelf. But we're

*talking about entirely electronic distribution until the end of each series;
in which time someone could pay to download the latest issue, and share it
with 1000 people via bit-torrent, rapidshare, etc. And that's 1000 people
that don't have to pay a subscription.*

*In any case, I'd definitely be up for that editor's position.
=)*

And:

My only thought about the model is it doesn't address overhead. Were you planning to go with Lulu to do that as well?

And:

1. RE: Suckitudinous Fiction: You could actually put a piece in each issue that conveys exactly what you mean by 'Suckitudinous Fiction' if you can find authors who are willing to submit pieces that fit this criteria. A sort of "How NOT to write good fiction" piece just for fun.

2. There is no indication as to how submissions will be judged/accepted. Who will be reading them for content and craft? Who will decide what authors get published in each issue?

3. If you accept an author's submission for a serial—do you want the entire piece upfront? If so, good. If not, what if said author flakes out on the story—as in the piece becomes weak and drags or just does not deliver the quality of the first part?

4. Who will your editors be? Will they go with people they know (i.e., friends) or be totally unbiased?

5. While “big name” authors are fine, they already have many venues that, sadly, do not question their work. (Some are even getting their latest works published that may never have made it through the front door just because their *NAME* is stamped on the manuscript.) Do Big Names really need another venue? If your goal is to offer a place for new authors to gain a footing and a following, then make them the draw and let their voices speak for them. Your editors (see #4 above) will be able to weed out the excellent from the mediocre and, while that might make it a bit harder to sell in the beginning, the quality of the publication and the work it contains will build the reputation for you. A quality product does not always need Big Names to get it flying. It could actually be a drawback if I, as a new and struggling author, want a place to call home as I fledge into the world. I would not want to compete with those names just yet. And, I would see them as taking up space that should, under your proposal, go to the new voices out there.

Sorry to be sending this to you as an e-mail rather than putting it in the comments section on your site. I wish I could figure out how to get in there. lol But, these are my comments for now. I like your plan, save for those questions already being asked as well as my questions. It sounds exciting and doable. I would be interested both as a writer and as a reader.

And...

While I like the idea of your model in theory, I wouldn't subscribe. I'm just not interested in getting little chunks of little novels, so widely spaced out in time. My flavour of serial fiction is the television or long novel series.

That said, I suggest really looking at the community-related suggestions you're getting, because I am the customer who chooses which series to try based on the

buzz I hear about them from people I trust or the critical excitement in communities that share my interests. If I try 'em and like 'em, I gobble them up as soon as they're released in my preferred format.

For me, "Ola™ No-Title" would be the TV that I don't watch, and the book later published by the author would be the season-on-DVD that I buy and watch in two days. I guess that's not directly useful to you as the cable company, but it might be something to think about as the writing patron.

And some were pretty encouraging:

I love the idea of a magazine full of serial stories. I'd subscribe to it.

CLIFFHANGERS would be a good name.

I think, though, if you limit yourself to two sci-fi stories, two fantasy stories, and one genre to be decided later, you're doing just that: limiting yourself. Maybe one sci-fi, one fantasy, and three to be determined later. The three could always include another sci-fi or fantasy story.

If the subscriber base is composed chiefly of writers hoping to get into the magazine, so what? I don't know how many subscribers your blog and newsletter get, but I'd guess it was considerably more than a couple hundred. I'd also guess that a number of them would subscribe just to be supportive. It's a business write-off for a working writer anyway.

Some I have not included because their authors asked me not to or included personally identifying details that I do not believe they wish to share.

And Then...

Much to my astonishment I also managed to create a tempest in a tepot over my tiny remark that porn sells but I'm not interested in selling it.

Here's the quote that pissed 'em off.

It's still selling fiction on the internet, albeit with printed novels taken from each issue eventually available, and I've seen that, at least with current models (unless you're doing porn, which is out of the question), selling fiction on the Internet is about as effective and fun as nailing your hand to a wall.

I'd think it would be obvious to anyone with a brain that ANY writer who is writing both adult and YA fantasy under her own name is not going to be even remotely interested in including anything that could be categorized as porn, or romantica, in a magazine she's ALSO putting out under her own name.

Was I insulting porn? Romantica? No.

I was noting that porn/romantica is the ONE type of fiction that you can sell on the internet and know it will go. The stuff sells, and sells very well, and where there's one big market for it, there's certainly another. And some of it is very well written. I'm simply not interested, even a little bit, in being that market.

Yes, when money was a nightmare a couple of years ago, I bought a handful of Ellora's Cave's offerings with the idea of cooking up a pseudonym and doing a few of them, just to bring in the extra bucks. Some I thought were funny as hell, a few were pretty hot, some I didn't care for, but in the end, no matter how much money I might have made doing them, I figure you only get so much time—and so many books to write—before you die. You better make sure every one you do is one you want

to claim.

I looked at my career, I decided I'd rather sink my time and effort into another novel on the Tonk than one where the main point is to see how many guys can lick whipped cream off the tied-up heroine before the hero decides he isn't mad anymore and comes in and chases them off so he can bang her. Yeah, that was one of the ones I read while sampling the genre. It was funny. Cute. But it had no theme, no subtext, no deeper meaning. It didn't make me think, it didn't challenge my beliefs, it didn't echo in my mind after I read it. It didn't change the way I looked at the world even a little bit. If I'm not looking for the *Why* of the world in what I'm writing, or in what I'm reading, I'm wasting my time.

This is me.

You are you. Your mileage may vary, and you may drive wherever you like with the gas you have left.

And Finally...

I think I figured out a way to answer most of the problems with my first model. Give me another couple of days to get my thoughts in order and run numbers to see how doable it is.

As far as I'm concerned, if I'm not going to be able to pay writers AT LEAST the SFWA minimum pro-market rate right out of the gate, the thing is a no-go.

But I think I've figured out how to do that.

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