**Resources For Aspiring Authors**

Probably one of the most valuable things we get from experience in any field is a collection of resources and tools we find helpful. The following are things I have found helpful in my own author journey. Each of these are tools and resources I use on a regular basis.

Since there is no possible way to give you all of this in a 45 minute talk, I decided to offer this list of what works for me. You may find in your journey there are other things that work well for you, or that another author is using a tool that works well for them. I offer this in hope it will save you some time and give you a boost.

**Your Local Library:**

Probably one of the best resources for authors is your local library. Not only can you do research there, but you can “hobnob with your fellow wizards”. Most libraries encourage writer’s groups to meet on a regular basis in their facilities.

In addition, you can ask your library staff to sponsor events like a local author’s book fair where local authors can speak with interested readers, sign copies of their books and address patron groups about writing and other topics. Become an active participant in their summer reading programs and other events. This will give you exposure in a comfortable and familiar environment and will increase interest and discussion of your books.

Be generous. To celebrate the publication of your books, be sure to donate a copy or more than one to your local library. The person in charge of collections will be happy to add it to their collection in the appropriate genre area.

**Your Local Bookstore(s):**

I have discovered that local bookstores are very open to supporting local authors, promoting them and selling their books. The trick is that they don’t buy from Amazon. If you have a print on demand distributor such as IngramSpark (see link below), you can simply give them the ISBN number of your book and they will easily be able to buy them and add them to their shelves. My favorite local bookstore sponsors events for authors such as book-signings, author talks and book fairs.

(Note: For chain bookstores, such as Barnes & Noble, etc., you might not have as much success, but don’t be afraid to try. My experience says that your reception will vary from store to store.)

**Writer’s Groups:**

* [**Shut Up and Write**](https://www.meetup.com/shutupandwritetricities/) (local writing meet up)
* [**WriteHive**](https://writehive.org/)(writing help on Discord, free virtual conference)
* [**NaNoWriMo**](https://nanowrimo.org/)(writing tracker with help)
* [**Scribophile**](https://www.scribophile.com/) (give a critique to get a critique)
* [**BookTok**](https://www.scribophile.com/)- TikTok for authors
* [**Savvy Indie Authors**](https://www.facebook.com/groups/112346926118436) **–** A highly supportive and informative group for independently published authors as well as those who are in process of preparing to independently publish their books.
* [**Aspiring Authors**](https://www.facebook.com/groups/485959524892243) **–** This group consists of both published authors who share their experience and unpublished authors who are still trying to figure it all out. The group is very receptive to questions and is very supportive of helping each other flesh out ideas, plots, characters, etc..
* [**NaNoWriMo**](https://www.facebook.com/groups/2108709199382454) **–** This is the support group for NaNoWriMo.org with over 28,000 members. This varies from teens still in school to experienced authors as well as the moderators. The purpose of the group is to encourage all of those involved in the NaNoWriMo project. (See the website below.)

**Writing Apps/Software**

* **OneNote** (free on Windows)
* **GoogleDocs** (free with your Gmail account)
* **Microsoft Word** (with Microsoft bundle)
* [**YWriter**](https://www.spacejock.com/yWriter.html) (Free, outliner + organizer)
* [**Scrivener**](https://www.literatureandlatte.com/scrivener/overview)(one time payment, outliner + organizer)
* [**Plottr**](https://plottr.com/)(subscription or one-time payment, outliner + organizer)

**List of Writer’s Associations:**

* [**Horror Writers Association**](http://horror.org/)**:** The Horror Writers Association (HWA) is a nonprofit organization of writers and publishing professionals around the world, dedicated to promoting dark literature and the interests of those who write it.
* [**International Women's Writing Guild**](http://www.iwwg.org/)**:** The IWWG, founded in 1976, is a network for the personal and professional empowerment of women through writing and open to all regardless of portfolio.
* [**Mystery Writers of America**](http://mysterywriters.org/)**:** Mystery Writers of America is the premier organization for mystery writers, professionals allied to the crime writing field, aspiring crime writers, and those who are devoted to the genre. MWA is dedicated to promoting higher regard for crime writing and recognition and respect for those who write within the genre.
* [**Romance Writers of America**](http://www.rwa.org/)**:** Romance Writers of America® (RWA) is a nonprofit trade association whose mission is to advance the professional interests of career-focused romance writers through networking and advocacy. RWA works to support the efforts of its members to earn a living, to make a full-time career out of writing romance—or a part-time one that generously supplements his/her main income.
* [**Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America**](http://www.sfwa.org/)**:** SFWA is a professional organization for authors of science fiction, fantasy and related genres. Esteemed past and present members include Robert Silverberg, Anne McCaffrey, Isaac Asimov, Connie Willis, Ray Bradbury, Gene Wolfe and Andre Norton
* [**Western Writers of America**](http://westernwriters.org/)**:** Western Writers of America, Inc., was founded in 1953 to promote the literature of the American West and bestow Spur Awards for distinguished writing in the Western field. The founders were largely authors who wrote traditional Western fiction, but the organization swiftly expanded to include historians and other nonfiction authors, young adult and romance writers, and writers interested in regional history.
* [**Women's Fiction Writer's Association**](https://www.womensfictionwriters.org/)**:** The Women’s Fiction Writers Association is an inclusive organization of writers who create stories about a woman’s emotional journey. We are a volunteer-run organization dedicated to providing a community for career-focused women’s fiction writers via networking, education, and continuing support in career growth.
* [**American Christian Fiction Writers**](http://www.acfw.com/)— A writers association for writers of Christian novels and stories.
* [**Historical Novel Society**](https://historicalnovelsociety.org/) — A great association of writers of historical fiction. Offers community, networking opportunities (agents, editors, publishers, booksellers), and more.
* [**Novelists, Inc.**](http://www.ninc.com/)— A professional writers organization for multi-published book authors.
* [**Mystery Writers Of America**](http://www.mysterywriters.org/) — An organization for writers of mystery novels, as well as editors, screenwriters, and other professionals associated with the mystery genre.
* [**Romance Writers Of America**](http://www.rwa.org/) — The trade organization for writers of romantic fiction.
* [**Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America**](https://www.sfwa.org/)— SFWA offers many resources for writers of speculative genres. A very vibrant and active writers association.
* [**Sisters In Crime**](https://www.sistersincrime.org/)— A writers organization dedicated to the professional advancement of women who write in the crime and mystery genres.
* [**Western Writers Of America**](http://westernwriters.org/)— A writers association for authors whose work focuses on the American West.
* [**Welcome To The NEA: Or, How To Get Money For Writing Stuff**](https://www.arts.gov/)— One of the most consistently magnanimous supporters of the arts in America is the National Endowment for the Arts, which has numerous—and generous—grants available in all areas of the arts, including literature. [Learn more about the NEA.](https://writersrelief.com/blog/2013/11/welcome-nea-get-money-writing-stuff/)
* [**Women’s Fiction Writers Association**](http://womensfictionwriters.org/)— An inclusive organization of writers creating layered stories in which the plot is driven by the main character’s emotional journey.

## ****Nonfiction Writers Associations And Organizations****

* [**American Society Of Journalists And Authors (ASJA)**](https://www.asja.org/) — For independent nonfiction writers and freelancers.
* [**Asian American Journalists Association**](http://www.aaja.org/)— A writers organization for new and veteran journalists who are Asian Pacific Americans.
* [**National Association Of Memoir Writers**](http://www.namw.org/)— For writers of all levels who are writing memoir, personal essays, and nonfiction.
* [**Native American Journalists Association**](http://www.naja.com/)— A writing organization for Native American journalism. Offers many opportunities for professional advancement.
* [**Nonfiction Authors Association**](https://nonfictionauthorsassociation.com/)— Their primary focus is helping their members with educational resources and community support for marketing nonfiction books.

## ****Poetry: Organizations For Poets****

* [**Poetry Society Of America**](https://poetrysociety.org/)— An association of writers who love poetry in all forms. Welcomes published and unpublished poets.
* [**Academy Of American Poets**](https://poets.org/)— Regularly sponsors national poetry events and poetry publications in order to advocate poetry. Membership dues for this writing association help pay for programs.

## ****Writers Associations: General And Specific Interests****

* [**Association of Writers And Writing Programs**](https://www.awpwriter.org/) — For writers and teachers affiliated with college and university writing programs.
* [**Authors Guild**](http://www.authorsguild.org/)— A professional organization for writers, great for keeping up with the changing face of the publishing industry and issues related to copyright protection.
* [**The Catholic Writers Guild**](http://www.catholicwritersguild.com/) — For writers of all kinds who share the Catholic faith.
* [**Cat Writers Association**](https://catwriters.com/)— A community for writers who specialize in cats.
* [**Dog Writers Association of America**](http://www.dwaa.org/) —A community for writers who specialize in dogs.
* [**Islamic Writers Alliance**](http://www.islamicwritersalliance.net/) — Members include “published and aspiring writers, editors, artists, publishers, journalists, playwrights, Web designers, retailers, and marketing consultants.”
* [**The National Writers Union**](http://nwu.org/) — A freelance writers union for authors in all genres: This group is a trade organization that advocates for the rights of authors.
* [**International Association For Journal Writing**](https://iajw.org/)— A writers association that focuses on journaling and creative expression.
* [**International Women’s Writing Guild**](http://www.iwwg.org/)— An association of women writers developed for networking and offering mutual support.
* [**Military Writers Society Of America**](http://www.mwsadispatches.com/)— An organization for writers, poets, and artists who focus on military service. Encourages memoir writing, writing as therapy, and education about publishing.
* [**National Association Of Independent Writers And Editors**](http://naiwe.com/) — From the website: This writers association includes “novelists, copywriters and copyeditors, writing coaches, proofreaders, magazine writers, writing teachers, business writers and editors, academic writing evaluators, writers of literature for children, fiction editors and other specialists.”
* [**National Writers Association**](http://nationalwriters.com/)— A writers association for all levels and genres that offers some professional services, such as contract review and critique.
* [**Pacific Northwest Writers Association**](https://www.pnwa.org/) — A Northwest writers association “to develop the writing talent through education, accessibility to the publishing industry, and participation in an interactive, vital writer community.”
* [**PEN America Center**](http://www.pen.org/)— An organization with global reach that defends the right to expression through the written word.
* [**Small Publishers, Artists, And Writers Network**](http://www.spawn.org/) — (SPAWN) An inclusive writers group for independent-minded writers, publishers, printers, and members of the media.
* [**Society of Children’s Book Writers And Illustrators**](http://www.scbwi.org/) — An association for writers of books for children.
* [**Texas Association Of Authors**](https://www.facebook.com/TexasAuthors/)— The only organization in Texas whose focus is to promote the authors within the great state of Texas itself. **Texas Authors** leverages the knowledge and expertise of many different authors to help promote others within the world of reading and writing.
* [**Women’s National Book Association**](http://www.wnba-books.org/)— A national organization of women and men who work with and value books.
* [**Writers Guild Of America**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Writers_Guild_of_America) — Two writers organizations (east and west) that represent writers in motion pictures, broadcasting, and other media.

**Self-Publishing Resources:**

* [**Draft2Digital**](https://www.draft2digital.com/r/REjayY) **–** Print on Demand service for ebooks and the print on demand is currently in beta stages. Excellent way to get your ebook distributed through about a dozen different ebook retailers including Nook, Amazon and Barnes & Noble. But the best thing is that it also distributes through Overdrive, Tolino and other library ebook lending programs. They pay commissions on time and they also allow for royalty splits with your collaborators.

They also have a great formatting tool to format your book to prepare for publication. I’ve been very pleased with their service.

* [**Bowker Identification Services**](https://www.myidentifiers.com/) **–** Here is the place to buy your ISBN numbers. Owning your own ISBNs is very important. They also provide services such as copyright and other writer’s tools. I generally buy ISBNs in bulk, as my books are a series, but you can purchase them individually as well.
* [**Ingram Spark Self-Publishing (Print on Demand)**](https://www.ingramspark.com/) **–** A great platform for printing and distributing your books. If you are an Alliance of Independent Authors member (see below), you can publish your books through them at no cost. That alone makes an Alli membership worth the price. They also have an ebook distribution program, but I use Draft2Digital for that.

**Writing and Support Tools:**

* [**ProWritingAid**](https://shareasale.com/r.cfm?b=1010592&u=2553505&m=72053&urllink=&afftrack=) **–** This is a tool I would never again be without. I use the plugin they have designed for Microsoft Word, but the plugin works with pretty much any word processing tool, including Google Docs. This not only corrects basic spelling and grammar issues, but gives suggestions to fix awkward sentence structure and over-used words. I highly recommend you use this tool for your first couple of edits before sending your manuscript to a professional editor. It will save you money and speed up your publishing process.
* [**Alliance of Independent Authors**](https://allianceindependentauthors.org/?affid=8049) **–** This professional organization is for published authors and those who are preparing to publish. You can join as an associate (pre-published), an Author, or Authorpreneur (experienced, already successful author). There are many benefits to membership, which include free distribution by IngramSpark, an active member-only Facebook support group and discounts on many of the favorite authoring tools. Highly recommended. I don’t know what I would do without it.
* [**NaNoWriMo**](https://nanowrimo.org/) **–** This stands for National Novel Writers’ Month. It is an app that allows authors to challenge themselves to set specific word goals in their writing, teaching you how to create professional level writing habits. The membership is free. You can track your word count trends and stay motivated in the NaNoWriMo private Facebook group.

I initially wrote my first book with the help of this tool. It taught me good writing habits and the encouragement of other authors in the same journey made all the difference. I joined during the November 50,000 word in a month writing challenge and not only finished the challenge, but a month later I had completed my first book and was ready to prepare it for publishing. So glad someone recommended it to me!

In conclusion: The main purpose of this document is to give you some boosts in the right direction. There are so many scams out there, people who will gladly take your money and never return on their promises. Hopefully these suggestions will help you avoid that. In the groups, before you invest in an offer from someone who wants to “help” you sell your books or publish them, take the time to ask experienced authors about those offers. I have found a lot of great guidance, especially in the Alliance of Independent Authors Facebook group.

Don’t give up on your dream. Put in the elbow grease and reap the rewards. Write ON!

Best wishes for your success,

Bonnie K.T. Dillabough

(Feel free to friend me on FB. Just mention you attended the author talk. When you make the friend request, be sure to leave out the “K.T” in the middle, as that will just take you to my author page.)