

Latinidad 11/13: 10th Anniversary – Online Book Publicity

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1. Saludos

In continuation of my celebration of Latinidad's tenth anniversary, I am culling the best advice and advisors from back issues to help you get published. Previously, I've discussed managing money and time, writing classes, critique groups, the revision process, the submission process, writing for magazines, and traditional publicity. This month's focus is on online publicity.

Technology has revolutionized how books are read, and how they are marketed. What hasn't changed is that authors are expected to take the lead in promoting their work. Thanks to social media, writers have the tools to cultivate a following. To learn how to use those tools, read this month's Q&A with online book publicity expert Fauzia Burke.

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2. Q&A

Fauzia Burke is the Founder and President of FSB Associates, a web Publicity and social media firm specializing in creating awareness for books and authors. Founded in 1995, FSB's mission is to give authors an opportunity to promote their work to an eager, targeted audience online. For more information, visit <http://www.fsbassociates.com/> and for web publicity and social media news, follow Fauzia on <http://twitter.com/WebSnapshot>

Q: What are the advantages of online book publicity vs. traditional book publicity?

A: The Internet offers longevity. Web features and links are available to readers now, and new readers months and years from now. Like a snowball rolling down a hill, these features are able to grow thanks in large part to social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, which thrive on a constant flow of information. Unlike traditional publicity, such as advertising, TV appearances, print features, speaking engagements and radio interviews, all web features are linked directly to a bookseller or the author. This takes the potential reader from a place of "liking" the book to buying the book with one click of a mouse.

Today's readers are tech savvy, resourceful, and have higher expectations of publishers and authors. Online book publicity allows these readers to get the information they need immediately and to share that information with their own social network. Nowadays, readers don't just buy a book, they want to receive a community with their book. The bottom line is that publishers and authors need to evolve their marketing and publishing strategies to accommodate a new kind of reader, a reader whose expectations involve more interaction and community.

Q: What mistakes do authors make when they promote their books online?

A: The biggest mistake an author can make in terms of promoting their books online is not actively engaging in social media and taking the time to establish a unique digital footprint. Many authors feel that by building a Website, they have covered their bases online. However, it is not that easy anymore. If I were an author in today's competitive market, I would consider the time I spend developing my online platform and building my brand on the Web as an extension of my job as a writer. Publishing a book or any professional writing is a small business and authors should look at it as such. Now, online branding is not a luxury or an afterthought—it is a necessity.

We are seeing the impact of social media in every direction and in every medium. There are 105 million users on Twitter and they send 50 million tweets per day. We are in an age of authenticity and people want to know about the authors that speak to them. Twitter makes it very easy to share information, stay connected, and to "follow" your favorite authors and publishers. Using social media applications like Tweet Reach, a search engine "powered by tweets," allows you to monitor how many people were reached by your tweet. Lasting visibility and publicity is never based on a single individual, one tweet or post, but an array of contributors.

Online publicity hits are more important than ever. Each time you get a

review or feature, it becomes something that you can Tweet about or post to Facebook. Getting the placement is simply not enough; you have to utilize a variety of these social media applications in order to share the feature with your social network. Sharing is the key to increased visibility and exposure for a book. In fact, the daily mantra at FSB has evolved into, "If it can't be shared, it shouldn't be done!" The more features you get, the more exposure you can generate on social media sites. You need to bring each piece of publicity and recognition full circle by sharing it with your social network.

Q: What online book publicity tips can you offer to authors?

A: No surprise here, but "word of mouth" on Twitter spreads very quickly. The word can spread very fast within a 24-hour period, so the more information available about you, your work, and your interests, the greater the chance of gaining a fan, a feature, or a sale. With that said, I urge you to start the chatter!

Please be social, share yourself, and be authentic. Make sure that you have a variety of places where you can share information and grow your features, publicize your book, and share your successes. All of these outlets provide more exposure for your book and help to establish a strong digital footprint. Publicity breeds more publicity. So, my advice is to chat it up, be social, and continue building a social network. However, you must remember not to be a living, breathing advertisement. My rule of thumb on sharing is a 4 to 1 ratio. You can post something self-promotional if you post 4 other non-promotional links that are helpful to your followers. The key is to build credibility.

Q: What changes or trends do you predict in online book publicity?

A: Content development is going to continue to grow in importance. Videos and slide presentations offer readers a new way to interact with their favorite authors. Recently, we posted a slideshow with "Five Tips to Being Happy at Work" on slideshare.net. It is a helpful and useful resource for our clients and, at the end of the presentation, we can give our viewers "Calls to Action" by embedding links to online booksellers, and author's websites. The benefit of this particular strategy is that the views of the slideshow can be seen just like YouTube, and it can also be easily shared on Facebook and Twitter through one-click-sharing. Additionally, the slideshow has great SEO's and is readily available in the search results of all major search engines. Being able to embed links to online marketplaces such as Amazon.com or BarnesandNoble.com into the presentation is a

crucial way to ensure that an inclined buyer is given the opportunity to purchase the title on the spot.

Q: Other than your fabulous blog on The Huffington Post, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/searchS/?q=fauzia+burke>, what other blogs, web sites, and/or books do you recommend to writers who wish to learn more about online book publicity?

A: Books:

Engage by Brian Solis

Trust Agents by Chris Brogan

The New Rules of Marketing and PR, 2nd Edition by David Meerman Scott

Twitter Power by Joel Comm & Anthony Robbins

The Presentation Secrets of Steve Jobs by Carmine Gallo

The Referral Engine by John Jantsch

Blogs:

<http://www.copyblogger.com/>

<http://sethgodin.typepad.com/>

<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/>

<http://www.personalbrandingblog.com/>

Sites:

<http://marketing.alltop.com/>

<http://social-media.alltop.com/>

Great reference sites:

<http://listorious.com/>

<http://addictomatic.com/>

<http://twittercounter.com/>

<http://www.blogpulse.com/>

<http://hootsuite.com/>

<http://tweetreach.com/>

3. Resources

HOW EDITORS THINK

"I read How Editors Think in one sitting and was engaged from beginning to end. It is well written, highly informative, and humorous—I found myself laughing out-loud in a few spots! Thanks for sharing the secrets of the trade."

—Mayra Lazara Dole, author of Down to the Bone

Inspired by my experience as a former Simon & Schuster editor, *How Editors Think: The Real Reason They Rejected You* reveals what it really takes to get published. For more information, visit:

<http://www.marcelalandres.com/E-book.html>

ON-THE-VERGE EMERGING VOICES AWARD

Deadline: November 15

The SCBWI (Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators) offers grants to two writers or illustrators who are from an ethnic and/or cultural background that is traditionally under-represented in children's literature in America. For more information, visit <http://www.scbwi.org/>

\$20,000 SHORT FICTION COLLECTION AWARD

Deadline: November 15

The Story Prize is an annual book award honoring the author of an outstanding collection of short fiction with a \$20,000 cash award. Authors may enter eligible works. For more information, visit [http://](http://www.thestoryprize.org/)

www.thestoryprize.org/

FLASH FICTION CONTEST

Deadline: November 21

Unstuck is a journal that emphasizes literary fiction with elements of the fantastic, the futuristic, or the surreal—a broad category that would include the work of writers as diverse as Borges and Vonnegut. They seek flash fiction with fewer than 1000 words. For more information, visit [http://](http://www.unstuckbooks.org/)

www.unstuckbooks.org/

\$4048 SHORT STORY PRIZE

Deadline: November 30

The Fish Short Story Prize offers approximately \$4048 and publication in the Fish Publishing anthology for a short story. For more information, visit [http://](http://www.fishpublishing.com/)

www.fishpublishing.com/

NACCS TEJAS AWARD FOR FICTION

Deadline: December 3

The National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies seeks a novel or collection of short stories that best represents a significant topic related to the Mexican American experience in Texas. Authors may self-nominate. For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/k8lso5q>

NACCS TEJAS AWARD FOR YOUNG ADULT FICTION

Deadline: December 3

The National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies seeks a young adult novel or young adult collection of short stories that best represents a significant topic related to the Mexican American experience in Texas. Authors may self-nominate. For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/k8lso5q>

PERSONAL ESSAY CONTEST

Deadline: December 6

Ladies' Home Journal offers \$3000 and possible publication for a personal essay on the theme "The Best Decision I Ever Made." For more information, visit <http://www.lhj.com/essaycontest>

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR WRITERS OF COLOR

The Vermont College of Fine Arts (VCFA) and Barry Goldblatt Literary, LLC announce the creation of The Angela Johnson Scholarship, a talent-based grant for writers of color attending the Writing for Children & Young Adults Master of Fine Arts program. The \$5,000 scholarship will be awarded to up to two students annually. For more information, e-mail ann.cardinal@vcfa.edu and put "Angela Johnson Scholarship" in the subject line.

SEEKING MOM SUBMISSIONS

Brain, Child is the largest literary magazine for mothers, a unique amalgamation of The New Yorker and Parenting. Their mission is to bring the voices of women of different backgrounds and circumstances together on the page, on their website, and on their blog. For more information, visit <http://www.brainchildmag.com/>

WRITING THROUGH YOUR DIVORCE BLOG

If you've been divorced for years, remarried after divorce, or if you're thinking about filing next week, the editors of the blog Writing Through Your Divorce want to read your work. They seek personal essays, short fiction, experimental fiction, and poetry. For more information, visit <http://writingdivorce.com/submissions>

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER ONLY WHEN SHARED

Please forward Latinidad® widely.

For more resources, visit <http://www.marcelalandres.com/resources.html>

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Visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/marcelalandres/>

“A writer needs to realize he can't just sit home and write. He must market, promote, blog, Twitter, travel, call, cajole, shake hands, interpretative dance, whatever it takes to build a platform.”

—Wade Rouse

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