Want To Write A Book?

Start With A Blog

Christian Bloggers International

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So you want to write a book. I get that. You have been mulling over your ideas for a while now. You have been dreaming about all of the people it will help and all of the lives this best seller will change as it flies off the bookshelves. And even dreaming about the extra cash which will be added to your wallet as a result of your project.

Yet you don't know where to start. You see the end, but you have no idea as to how to get the job done, or even how to start. The writing itself seems like a formidable task – and then who will help design the cover? And how will you get it published? And will anyone buy it?

After being flooded with all of these thoughts, you once again set the dream aside and promise yourself that you will tackle that another day. Or maybe not. You find yourself thinking*, Why in the world do I think that I could really be an author?*

Has a similar scenario ever played out in your mind? I've met many people who have gone through such, and I know what that feels like. I have been there myself.

So I am here to help you, if you would like. Since 2010 I have written and published more than 20 books. Most of these are on Amazon in hard copy and on Kindle. Though I once thought that this would be impossible, I now know better. It was possible for me – and it's possible for you

also. I plan to continue to write and publish for many years to come. And you can do the same.

Along the way I have learned quite a bit – some by studying from others and some from trial and error. In fact, the error portion of my education may be the longest lasting, and that's a very comforting thought.

You see, no honest efforts are lost.

It's comforting to know that even when you make mistakes, you are learning valuable lessons. What works for one person doesn't always work the same way for another, so you begin to learn what works for you. As a result, nothing you do is lost. Either you do something which is successful, or you do something which teaches you a lesson on what not to do.

So since you have nothing to lose, you might as well take a deep breath and get started.

Okay, so where do you start?

Actually there are several ways to start your project. If you have already started your writing, or if you have even been jotting down ideas, you may be ready to organize your book and continue to publication.

I have found, however, with talking to people that there are many who want to write a book yet haven't written anything down. All of their thoughts are still in their head.

In either case, my recommendation is the same, and one which may surprise you. If you want to write a book, start with a blog.

"Oh, no," you say?

Now hang in there a minute; I know that you want to write a book and not a blog, but hear me out and you will see why I am saying what I am saying. Think of yourself as starting a journey – a journey which will take you to the publication of your book and to the many sales it will bring. Well, this journey, just like every journey of a thousand miles, begins with a single step.

What's so great about starting with a blog? There are several reasons for beginning this way.

1. **Today's book market depends on someone having an online presence,** and there is no better way to do that than with a blog. It might be a place where you will eventually take orders for your book. Certainly it will be a launching pad for publicizing your book.

   As you start advertising your product, this will be a central place where people can go to find out about what you have written.

2. **When you have a blog, it's easier to be recognized as an expert in your field.** As you write articles about your subject, people will come to know you as the go-to person on your topic. This status will be something which will grow over time, so the sooner you start the better.

3. **Your blog will help you to reach the right audience when your book is published.** You will see eventually that you can write the greatest book ever, but if no one knows about it, no one will buy it. With a blog, when your book is published, you will already have an audience wanting to know what you are writing.

4. **Somewhat connected to the last point is the fact that your blog will give a location from which to collect email addresses of people who are interested in what you have to say**. This is referred to throughout the internet industry as your "list." And everyone who knows anything about doing business on the internet knows that you need to have a "list."

   At your website you will have a place for people to sign up and give you their email addresses. In doing so, they are raising their hands to tell you that they are interested. Certainly that is the best place to start when you want to sell your newly written book.

5. **Probably the most beneficial reason for starting with a blog is that you can begin to write your ideas and thoughts in an almost random way**. Try to focus on the topic of your book, but you can almost think of it as brainstorming your thoughts in small segments.

   This is really significant, because later you can take the material you have written and organize it into a

well thought out manuscript. The threads of what you are attempting to say will begin to emerge on their own. As you do this, you will become clearer in your vision of the finished product.

Your writing will become easier over time. With a blog, you are writing smaller posts, which are much easier to do than a many-chaptered book.

Interestingly, your posts can become the skeleton of your finished work. When these random thoughts are organized and prioritized, you can set them up as chapters – and use them as a springboard for your expanded version of the topics.

I know of several bloggers who have written best-selling books consisting of their favorite blog posts. So as you blog, you may be writing the rough draft of your book in its entirety.

"Okay, got it!" you say.

So how do you start this?

It's hard for any of us to realize that the world wide web has been around only since the early 90's. Today it dominates every facet of society, and has revolutionized how we communicate, shop, pay our bills, obtain our information, and many other things. Most of us love it, though we sometimes can be afraid of its ramifications.

When the internet first came into widespread use, setting up websites or establishing a presence online was very

difficult. If someone wanted a website, they had to learn how to enter complex code or pay hundreds and even thousands for someone else to do it. For that reason many people think that it is still difficult and expensive, and they shy away from heartily embracing the internet and establishing their presence there.

Today, things are totally different. Over the last couple of decades, gifted computer programmers have put their artistry to work on our behalf, and we get to benefit from what they have done. One of the most revolutionary masterpieces out there today is WordPress. It is free open-sourced software which makes up a platform for beautiful websites.

In case the terminology is unfamiliar, "open-source" means that not just one company or person has designed it. Many people have made and are continuing to make contributions to improve its functionality and ease of use. And the word "software" refers to the internet code which they have written to make the product work a certain way and look a certain way.

WordPress offers many free themes, or templates, from which to choose. These themes are the software which give the website its distinct design and functionality. If you go online and scroll around to many different websites, you will begin to see similarities. Very often there will be a wide section which might contain a blog or articles. Then on the side, you will often see a column of small squares which advertise other products. Finally, across the top or down one side – you will see a list of topics on the website. When you click on these titles you will be taken

to other parts of the site where you will discover more content.

Those are the main sections of the website – along with your heading. Later I will walk you through the process of setting up the site, and you are going to be amazed that it is as easy as it is.

You can do this!

When do you blog?

There are some bloggers who write a post every day. There are others who write once a week or even once a month. My suggestion is to write at least once a week. You want to have enough content going out that you keep the interest of others. If you can contribute content twice a week, that is even better.

Over time, you will establish what works best for you.

What do you blog about?

As I mentioned earlier, your focus is on the topic of your book. That's your special niche (your special area of interest), so let your posts be about what you know. You will be developing your place in your niche, and you will be helping others to learn about the subject.

As in everything that you do, when you focus on giving to others, then you will receive your reward – financially or otherwise. The most read and most beneficial blogs are always those which try to deliver lots of terrific content or

advice. Concentrate on giving people that content, and you will be setting yourself up for great success.

One pattern for blogging is establishing a theme for a month. Then your posts could center around that theme – each post building on the other. As the month goes by, people are eager to read the next post, adding to their knowledge or inspiration.

As you continue with your blog, you might want to include blog posts from other bloggers. That increases your audience and it also delivers other voices which will enhance your readers' experience.

One source of supplementing your writing is purchasing PLR content. PLR stands for Private Label Rights, and it's a terrific concept to help the blogger. For a small fee, you can purchase packets of blogposts or other writing, with the privilege of editing these posts and claiming them as your own writing. For a dollar or two per post, you can add to the content you already have.

You definitely want to make some changes to your PLR posts – in order to give them your distinct voice and to have them continue in the vein of your other writing. Yet adding PLR is very helpful in maintaining a flow of ideas and increasing the interest of your blog.

There are several sites which make PLR available. One such is http://thesoar.net/PLR.

There are many ways to accomplish your blogging mission. You will begin to see what is fruitful for you as you proceed with your personal plan.

As a footnote, we are primarily talking about writing, but many people prefer to speak their content. These audio forms of the blog are called podcasts and can be heard from the website and later distributed on Itunes or other audio sites. Quite a few people have the podcasts and the transcript both available at their sites.

Are You Ready? Exhale, take a deep breath, and let's keep moving forward.

WordPress: an amazing gift.

Earlier I mentioned this free software which has revolutionized the internet. It's totally free, because many people have contributed to it at no charge. They are constantly updating the software, otherwise known as a content management system, in order to improve its function and ease of use.

This software has become so successful that major businesses use it for their sites. Walt Disney World, The New York Times, Glamour Magazine, and the Jane Goodall Foundation are just a few entities which use this free software. With the many different themes available, you can use it for any type of site, whether it is a simple blog or a massive shopping site. The possibilities are truly endless.

Right now it would be good for you to take a look, just so that you will know what we are talking about. Why don't you take a peek at https://wordpress.org/showcase and see some of the featured websites at the moment. Not only will you see *who* is doing it, but also *what* they are doing with the software. You will see that whatever your

vision might be for your presence on the internet, you can make it happen through this amazing software. Sites which used to cost thousands of dollars are available to you free – or at a very small cost.

Wordpress.org versus Wordpress.com

Since we are primarily talking about blogs, we need to take a look at two possibilities. This software started with Wordpress.com. That's a site which allows many people to post their blogs absolutely free. Not only do they provide the software, but they also provide free hosting so that it's totally free. If you want to start this way – without spending a penny – you can start here.

There are several pros and several cons to this choice, however. The most important pro is that you can start a blog at Wordpress.com absolutely free, just as we've said. You might not be sure of how you want to proceed with your website and think that you would like to have a trial run. That's fine, and frankly, that's where I started. I didn't want to spend much money, so my first blog was at Wordpress.com

There are quite a few themes to choose from, so you can have a blog which looks like you want it to look.

The cons are that if you want it absolutely free, you will definitely have some restrictions. No one can purchase anything from your Wordpress.com site. So you will never be able to sell your book from there. Another con is that, since most people know that the Wordpress.com platform is free, your site doesn't have the professional appeal you want to establish.

So that's why my recommendation is to go ahead and invest a few bucks, and go with Wordpress.org. When you do this, your costs are still low. You will want to purchase a domain name, which will cost an average of $15 per year. Then you will need to put your website on a server, or hosting site, which will cost about $6 or $7 a month.

Let me explain those terms a little bit. We are accustomed to many of our modern conveniences being provided for us – right at our fingertips. Our electricity comes to our homes through electrical wiring, but we know that there are large transformers, or electrical grids, which generate the electricity we need. Similarly, we have wireless telephones now through many companies, which have their sources of connection through the cell towers. Or we have cable companies which provide TV viewing by the means of huge satellites, which are able to access many different channels.

We have all of these conveniences without having to have transformers, cell towers, or large satellites in our yards. Those huge sources of convenience are connected to us by relatively small wiring – or even wirelessly.

Think of the internet in the light of these conveniences we have known for a long time. There are locations (hosting companies) which have very large, very capacious computers, which are called "servers." These are capable of holding and transmitting trillions of data points to locations throughout the world. These computers are much too large and too expensive for us to have in our homes or offices, so we rent space on them in order to conduct our business on the internet. When we connect to

these servers, we are able to locate the data which they have. We don't see the wires going through the air, because these transmissions are wireless, but data is being sent through the atmosphere, just the same.

When you set up your website, you need a hosting company, which will let you rent space on their server to hold your data so that your site can be accessed by others. Another way of thinking about this is to think of a location which has huge filing cabinets. You rent space in one of their drawers. You will have a folder there, and all of your information for your website will be in your file folder. When someone wants information from your file, your hosting company has great capacity to deliver it to them. At the same time, your hosting company has capacity to protect your information from being hacked or misused by others. There are many different servers which do this, just as there are many cellphone providers from which to choose.

I'm sure that there are quite a few great companies which provide this service. I have a definite preference, and I will tell you why. Over the last few years, I have used three different companies. As a new participant in this website adventure, there were times when I wanted to ask questions or get advice concerning my websites. All of the companies had customer service, but the quality of their service varied considerably.

The first company I used had me send an email for questions, and they would answer me the next day. Pretty slow for my problems to be solved. The second company had 24-hour customer service, but the people answering my call spoke very little English (my language), and I

couldn't communicate my problem or understand their answers.

I finally found a company - [Bluehost](#) - which more than met my needs. They have been truly available 24/7 either by phone or chat box. Whatever my question (and I am sure my questions were sometimes quite naive), the support people were gracious and helpful. One time I called with a problem which was actually an AT&T problem, and they even helped me fix that. Another time I called on New Year's Day, and a cheery voice gave me the answers I needed.

One other reason that I prefer [Bluehost](#) is their standard of excellence. This hosting company will not allow any pornography or nudity to be housed on their servers. If anyone tries to violate this principle, their site will be removed. Unfortunately, most companies have no such ban, but as a Christian, I appreciate the high moral standards.

Third, I have found that [Bluehost](#) has provided excellent service. The speed and the consistent quality of service have always been there. And there is plenty of room to expand. I have had as many as ten websites running on their server at once, and all of them had great quality of service.

You can sign up at [Bluehost](#).

Your Domain Name

Now, back to your Domain name. Continuing the concept of the file folders, your Domain is the name on your folder.

Think of it this way, when anyone in the world with internet access types in your folder name, (your domain name) your hosting company opens your file drawer, pulls out your folder, and makes your material available to them.

There are several avenues of thought about choosing your name. You could use your own name. or you could choose the name or initials of your organization or business. Or you could do a Google search and choose a term many are searching for. (This latter idea was once quite in vogue, but names of individuals or businesses are getting to be more the trend now).

Whatever you choose, you will need to add some terms indicating that this is a web address. All addresses start with http:// (or https:// for extra secure sites) and end with a period and one of several suffixes. .Com and .net are the most popular suffixes for regular sites. .Org is usually for nonprofits and .edu is for educational institutions. There are quite a few others available, and the number is growing as the internet grows.

For an example, I'll share some of my domain choices. My blog website address is my name, Suellen Estes, so my address looks like this: https://suellenestes.com My first book website (the first domain I ever had) is https://foreverupward.com. Our SOAR Network domain is https://thesoar.net. You might notice that the there are no spaces and no capitals in web addresses.

When you go to Bluehost, you will have an opportunity to choose your domain name. Each address is unique, so if someone else has what you want, you will have to choose

another. Sometimes the .com will be taken, but not the .net. Then when you go there, you will see that there are lots of other suffixes, such as .ws, .biz, etc. When you are choosing, keep in mind that you want people to remember your domain name, so I think that it's better to stick to the more common suffixes, if possible.

Wow! We have covered a lot of territory, haven't we? We've talked about the importance of establishing yourself as a go-to person in your field, and the best way to do that is through a blog. We've covered some of the ideas that make for a great blog. Then we've begun the process of setting up the website for your blog.

I know that you want to be a part of God's great army, sending His Word into the earth. Your voice is an important part of His plan. He needs all of us to accomplish His great mission: all hands on deck.

We have created a training to help you to set up your website. It's a free tutorial, which includes slides, to help you see what you need to do – and how easy it is – to begin your internet presence. We will show you how to set up your website with Wordpress, and how to create the design you want for your mission.

There are many different free Wordpress themes – and some paid ones – which will help you to make your website look and accomplish exactly what you want it to. We have some training videos which will take you through every step necessary to maximize the effectiveness of your site.

Remember, you can do this. It takes a little concentration and effort, but it's totally worth it in the end to see your blog – and eventually your book – out there for all to see. Look forward to seeing you there!

You can do this!