Meeting: Saturday, June 25, 2022
Time: 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 Noon
Location: Webinar—Zoom (watch for details)
Topic: “The Novelist’s Platform”
Speaker: Jennifer S. Wilkov

Platforms are more important today than ever for every writer, but novelists get confused about why they should have one, much less what theirs should include. In this presentation, popular podcast host and producer of the talk show, “Your Book Is Your Hook!” and sought-after book consultant, Jennifer S. Wilkov, will show you why you need to build a platform for yourself as a fiction writer and not just for your book to grow more fans and followers of your novels and writing career. (Ditto for nonfiction and children’s authors too!) Build your platform as a fiction writer the right way and start using it to attract more readers, agents, publishers, publicists, press, and fans to your books. Expect to learn:

- The basics for building a fiction writer’s platform
- How bragging is an integral part of your platform—and a good thing
- Proven techniques to use to focus on yourself as not only a writer but much more
- Why agents want you to have a platform as a novelist, even first-timers
- The secrets to making your fiction writer’s platform effective

Jennifer is a multi #1 international best-selling award-winning author, an award-winning freelance writer, a popular media personality and executive producer, the Literary Agent Matchmaker™ and a respected book & business consultant in her business called “Your Book Is Your Hook!” She supports first-time writers and seasoned authors with the essentials to become a bestseller: a great project, a strong platform and a well-polished pitch, presentation, and hook for their book. YourBookIsYourHook.com.
By Karla Olson  
President, Publishers & Writers of San Diego

PWSD News
What an amazing presentation by Jonathan Kirsch, publishing lawyer extraordinaire, in May. Jonathan is so incredibly knowledgeable about all things publishing, but also able to explain things so clearly in terms we can all understand. He took questions for an additional twenty minutes, and I think we could have listened to him for another hour. Thank you so much, Jonathan.

I’m so excited that this month we are doing a program specifically for writers and publishers of novels. We welcome back Jennifer Wilkov. Although she assures me that her program is applicable to any book, she will be giving extra ideas for novels. Please join us for a special program from a great speaker.

Meeting Etiquette
Please be sure you are muted while our speaker is presenting, as background noise is distracting for all other participants. If you have a question during the presentation, please put it in the chat, and the host (me!) will monitor the questions. Please save general questions for the Q&A at the end of the presentation. The host will call on you and ask you to speak if your question needs clarification.

The meetings are not recorded. Instead, most speakers have been sharing their slides, so be sure to go to the blog to find presentations by many of our past speakers.

PWSD Membership
We are happy to make these virtual meetings free to participants, and we hope you will support PWSD in the following ways:

Make sure your membership is up to date. Watch your inbox for a notice if your membership has expired. (If you wish, email Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com and he’ll check your membership.)
President’s Message—continued from previous page

1. **If your membership is up to date, please consider paying the meeting fee.** You can do this at [PublishersWriters.org](http://PublishersWriters.org) and clicking on RSVP.

2. **If you are not a member, please consider joining.** Membership is only $47 per year, which helps us to get the best speakers and provide other benefits to our members. Go to [PublishersWriters.org](http://PublishersWriters.org) to join.

3. **Tell your publishing and author friends and colleagues about PWSD** and have them join us!

When you join PWSD, in addition to the reduced meeting fee, you get many other benefits, as listed on page 5. You can easily join by clicking on the link to PayPal on our website, or send a check, made out to PWSD, to P.O. Box 387, Ventura, CA 93002.

**IBPA Membership**

I’m about to conclude my one-year term as chair of the Independent Book Publishers Association. I have been so honored to lead such a terrific organization! If you have launched on your publishing journey and you don’t know about IBPA, which can be a great support for you, I encourage you to explore the benefits of joining. This is the national association that includes such regional affiliates as PWSD. You can find information on their very robust and informative website at [IBPA-online.org](http://IBPA-online.org). Membership is very affordable, and to make it even better, PWSD members get a $30 discount. Just enter PWSD30 in the coupon code.

Go to [www.ReadLocal.org](http://www.ReadLocal.org) to find out more about our author marketing coalition, Read Local. While you are there, sign up for the Read Local Directory. This is one of the best ways to gain local exposure for your books. Booksellers, librarians, producers, and event planners have all used the Read Local Directory to find authors to feature in their stores and on their programs. A Basic Listing is FREE and includes your name, the title of your book, its genre, and your location. An Enhanced Listing is only $25 and adds a thumbnail of your cover, a book description, and other information that lets people know where to get your book and if you are available for speaking, etc. Check it out; Read Local is one of the best marketing deals around!
Save more and learn more: Attend PWSD meetings at reduced member rates! Yearly dues are only $47—one of the most economical memberships available. As a member, you save $10 at every PWSD meeting you attend, versus the $20 nonmember meeting fee. (Get meeting details for PWSD in each newsletter issue.) And take a look in the next section below at all the other extras you get as a member!

If you’re a new or returning member, welcome to the PWSD family! Congratulations on joining Publishers & Writers of San Diego, the only publishing group in San Diego County focused on the business of publishing and writing! You have made a wise investment, as you’ll see later on this page.

Subscribe to PWSD in order to optimize your membership: Receiving the email that accompanied this newsletter does not mean your name has been added to the regular notice distribution list. Go to PublishersWriters.org and click on the button that looks like what you see at right. This is necessary for you to receive any and all notices from PWSD.

Get found in the PWSD online member directory: Email your new or revised bio & headshot to Webmaster@publisherswriters.org as soon as you can, for valuable publicity! Our website is very highly ranked on Google, which means you will get broader exposure by being part of the member directory at PublishersWriters.org/member-directory. You must be an up-to-date member to be in the directory. Unsure when you should renew? Email Robbie@bookstudiobooks.com and he will let you know.

Get a snazzy permanent name badge to wear at on-site meetings: Your badge will be available at meetings. (Please remember to turn it in as you leave.)

Participate in occasional regional collaborative marketing efforts: If you’re subscribed (see above), you’ll be notified of these events whenever they occur.

Get a 30% discount on IBPA membership and optionally apply for a scholarship to IBPA’s annual Publishing University: If you’ve launched your publishing journey, join the Independent Book Publishers Association at IBPA-online.org/ and use PWSD as the code to get your discount.

Want to be profiled in PWSD’s newsletter? Contact Andrea Glass at Andrea@writersway.com. If your membership is current, she will provide you with eight simple questions to answer. Then, along with your answers, send your full contact information, a head shot, and one or two other images, such as book covers or action shots, to her and she will publish your finished profile in Publishers & Writers Monthly.

Do you have newsletter feature articles or ideas? Send them to Managing Editor Glenna Bloemen at gab11853@aol.com. We are currently seeking feature articles for the upcoming issues of the newsletter. If you’ve read something great or have an idea or an article that you believe would be of interest to your fellow members, please submit it to Glenna. Thank you for your continued support.
How to Design KDP A+ Content That Sells Books

Angela Haddon

Angela Haddon Book Cover Design

Reprinted with permission. This article was first published on AuthorImprints.com. It was later published in the March/April issue of IBPA Independent magazine, which can be accessed here.

The goal of all book marketing material is to close the sale. Amazon’s A+ content can go a long way toward achieving that goal by providing tantalizing visuals, conveying professionalism, and enhancing brand consistency.

Additionally, much like Amazon’s Look Inside the Book feature, A+ content helps to set reader expectations for your book. This is important, as you want to attract the readers most likely to enjoy your work and leave a positive review. If you inadvertently target the wrong market through unclear or misleading marketing material, you’ll wind up with unhappy readers and poor reviews—which nobody wants!

The key, therefore, is good design. Creating strong A+ content, the kind that appeals to your target market and boosts sales, takes forethought, planning, and careful execution. This article will discuss what you need to consider and how to plan your A+ design for the best possible results.

Choosing Your A+ Approach: Story-Based or Information-Based?

There are two broad approaches to designing your A+ content. While they aren’t fixed, and there’s certainly room for flexibility, it’s a good idea to first decide which approach would best serve your book. Not only will it help to narrow down layout options, but it will help to clarify the kind of content you should be prioritizing.

Story-based. This approach will tell (or tease) a story, relying heavily upon visuals, with the goal of enticing potential readers. Text is usually present, but its role is to enhance mood or pique interest. This story-based approach has more in common with billboards and movie posters than a product brochure. Best for these books:

- Nonfiction with a strong focus on imagery (e.g., photography and art books)
- Fiction (especially genre fiction)
- Memoirs (especially those that are more reflective and narrative-based)
- Single/stand-alone books

Information-based. This approach relies more heavily on textual information, with the goal of reassuring and convincing readers that investing in your content would be a good decision. The
visuals support the text, making the textual information easier to digest. This approach is much more like designing a traditional product brochure. Best for these books:

- Nonfiction with a strong focus on information (e.g., business, politics, self-help, educational)
- Books that are part of a series (where the additional focus on information would add understanding and context)

Note: For some book categories, like children’s books, you might find yourself torn between story-based and information-based. Story is the most immediately obvious choice; however, due to the educational nature of these books, you may want to add a little more information to your A+ content. In this case, a hybrid approach would be fine, provided your messaging is clear and uncluttered.

If you’re having a hard time deciding, ask yourself the following marketing question: Do you want to evoke an emotional response, or do you want to appeal to a reader’s intellectual curiosity and discernment? The former is better aligned with a story-based approach, and the latter with an information-based approach. If you really need elements from both, choose a hybrid approach.

**General Design Priorities**

You don’t need to be a graphic designer to plan strong A+ content. However, you do need some clear priorities. Before diving any deeper into strategies, here are a few things to bear in mind, no matter what direction you take.

**Clarity of Message**

Beautiful images, clean layout, and great copy will only do half the job if they’re not working together to convey a strong message. To help you stay on track, write down the message you want to convey before you choose images and fonts. Even better, include your target market in the message. This will help to guide and narrow your choices to the strongest options. Here are some examples:

- This cookbook delivers wholesome, rustic recipes for anyone keen to master traditional cooking methods.
- This romance is a sizzling, passionate whirlwind, set in a world of glamorous billionaires, aimed at contemporary romance readers, ages 18 to 35.
- This autobiography is a fun, tongue-in-cheek examination of a life lived with the brakes off, aimed at readers over 60.

Each of these examples should have conjured up some kind of imagery in your mind—and that’s the point! While it might be tempting to skip this step, recording your message in such a specific manner will save you a huge amount of time when it comes to creating your A+ content.

**Clarity of Layout**

Keep it simple! A+ content offers 17 different modules, but you’ll only need a few; between one and four is sufficient. Otherwise, you’ll overwhelm viewers and risk turning them away. There’s actually a limit of five modules per block of A+ content, so even if you wanted to go higher, you can’t.

**Brand Consistency**

If you’ve already embarked on a social media campaign for your book, it’s a good idea to continue this branding into your A+ content. This is because there can be a visual disconnect when a reader clicks on
a social media or website promotion and lands on your Amazon product page. A+ content is a great way to smooth this transition by visually repeating what they originally clicked on and reassuring them that they’re in the right place.

**Quality Images**

Stock images are absolutely fine, but be careful in their use; some need further editing or the application of filters to bring out their potential. If you don’t have these skills, stick with images that look professional right out of the box, or hire a photographer to take some real-world images for you.

Of course, you might already have high-quality images on hand. Check not just your marketing material, but your book’s interior; photographs, illustrations, paintings, charts, graphs, and iconography are just some examples of quality visual content that you can repurpose for A+ content.

With those general points in mind, here are the specific design strategies and how you can employ them.

**Story-Based Design Strategies**

**Three-part teaser.** If you want to entice readers with a compelling teaser, breaking it into three story beats is a great way to do this. You can split it into three separate images; alternatively, try a single image split into three horizontal strips, as follows:

Good module choices:

- Standard Image & Light Text Overlay, stacked into three rows (each image 970px wide by 300px high)
- Standard Image & Dark Text Overlay, stacked into three rows (each image 970px wide by 300px high)
The following shows the interface you’d be presented with if you chose Standard Image & Light Text Overlay:

**Image banner.** If you want to use a single high-impact image in wide landscape format, this would be a great choice. If you have promotional assets you’ve been using on social media, consider modifying them for this format. For example, repurposed Facebook covers are well suited to this format.
Good module choice:

- Standard Image Header with Text (image 970px wide by 600px high)—shown below.

**Image collage.** This is a great choice if you already have a collection of square, on-brand Instagram posts, or if you want to feature tantalizing quotes from your book in a visually interesting way.
Good module choices:

- Standard 3 Images & Text (300px by 300px each)—You can also stack modules, allowing you to create a 3-, 6-, or 9-image grid.
- Standard 4 Images & Text (220px by 220px each)—Note: These image blocks are a bit small, so unless you have a good reason not to, stick with the three-image module.

Here’s what the Standard 3 Images & Text Module looks like from the dashboard:

![Image](image.png)

You can also combine variations of the above for more interesting layouts; for example, an Image Banner plus an Image Collage would work well together. Just consider why you’re adding each new module, and don’t overwhelm your readers with too much visual content. (This, by the way, is why there tends to be fewer modules for the story-based approach; unlike the information-based approach, there are no blocks of text to break up the visuals. Always consider the experience from the reader’s point of view.)

**Information-Based Design Strategies**

Because this strategy incorporates more text, it lends itself toward different modules and layouts. While A+ currently offers 17 modules, the ones listed next should be sufficient for most purposes, and they’re the easiest to implement.

**Book summary.** This layout comprises a banner introduction to your book, a summary of what it’s about, and some featured content to round things out. Remember, you already have a book description at the top of your Amazon page, so try not to repeat yourself; your A+ content should add information that clarifies and entices but is in no way repetitive or redundant. Also, make sure your copy doesn’t break any of Amazon’s rules, which you can find at kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/G4WB7VPPEAREHAAD.

That said, here’s a layout breakdown, and what modules you can use:

1. **Banner image** (if possible, repurpose banner content from your website or social media). Good module choices:
   - Standard Image Header with Text (image 980px wide by 600px high)
   - Standard Image & Light Text Overlay (970px wide by 300px high)
   - Standard Image & Dark Text Overlay (970px wide by 300px high)
2. **Book summary** (includes an image with one to two paragraphs of text). Good module choices:
   - Standard Single Right Image (image 300px by 300px)
   - Standard Single Left Image (image 300px by 300px)

3. **Featured content.** The featured content part is where you can get creative. You can focus on specific book highlights, spotlight key chapters, or share special content. If your book is part of a series, you can show a comparison chart. Consider what information you could give potential readers to help them understand your work better and select a module accordingly. Good module choices:
   - Standard 3 Images & Text (300px by 300px each)
   - Standard Comparison Chart (each image 150px wide by 300px high)—Note: You can add up to six books in a side-by-side comparison chart.
   - Standard Image Header with Text (image 980px wide by 600px high)

The second module was Single Image with Highlights:

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**Sourcing Images**

Sourcing and creating the right visuals for your A+ content is arguably the most challenging and time-consuming part of the job. Hopefully, you already have multiple on-brand images that you can simply resize and reformat for your A+ content. This is not only the most efficient solution, but it also ensures brand consistency across the web. Scour your project folders for the following:

- Your book cover—if you can, get a separate copy of the background image, minus the text, so you can crop and refit it for an A+ content module.
- Book mockups—these can be paired with on-brand background imagery for strong book promotions.
- Internal images from your book—this could include illustrations, graphs, tables, maps, flourishes, title graphics—anything that’s visually interesting.
- Your website—use any banners, book promotions, and pre-edited imagery that you’ve already created.
- Social-media headers—use any banners, book promotions, and pre-edited imagery that you’ve already created.
• Social-media posts—use any marketing posts you may have published on Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, or Twitter.

If you don’t already have marketing material for your book, and you’ll be creating it from scratch, some of the above tips still apply. For example, using assets from your book cover would be a good jumping-off point. You should also explore stock images for appropriate imagery, paired with fonts that complement your book and/or brand. The key point to remember is that you’re not just picking images that you have a personal preference for; you’re appealing to a specific target market and conveying a specific message. With those guideposts in place, you’ll be able to stay on track and create solid marketing visuals.

And, of course, once you’ve created these assets for A+, it makes sense to ensure they’re published on your website and other marketing channels, again to reinforce your brand.

**What’s Next?**

While there are no hard-and-fast rules when it comes to A+ content, the guidelines shared in this article are a strong starting point. The most important thing to remember when designing your layout is the clarity of the message. Keep the layout clean, use quality graphics throughout, and, where possible, reinforce your book’s branding. This approach will go a long way toward convincing the right readers to buy your book.

If you’d like to see more examples, Amazon KDP has provided some useful A+ content design examples at [tinyurl.com/Amazon-Content-Examples](http://tinyurl.com/Amazon-Content-Examples).

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**Angela Haddon** is a book cover designer specializing in quality premade romance covers. She’s worked with New York Times bestselling authors, debut novelists, publishers, and successful, self-published authors to create eye-catching covers that appeal to the right reader. For more information and articles on book marketing, visit her website at [angelahaddon.com](http://angelahaddon.com). This article was originally published on [AuthorImprints.com](http://AuthorImprints.com).

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Want to be profiled in PWSD’s newsletter? Contact Andrea Glass at Andrea@writersway.com. If your membership is current, she will provide you with eight simple questions to answer. Then, along with your answers, send her your full contact information, a head shot, and one or two other images, such as book covers or action shots, and she will publish your finished profile in Publishers & Writers Monthly.

Bole Will Assume Role of Firebrand Group CEO
February 1, 2023
Her Final Day at IBPA Will Be November 30
Excerpted from Original IBPA Press Release
See also IBPA Board Announcement of CEO Departure Posted June 9, 2022

(Manhattan Beach, CA, June 9, 2022—the Firebrand Group (firebrandtech.com), the book industry’s leading technology company for cutting-edge software and services that enable publisher success, announced today that Angela Bole, current CEO at the Independent Book Publishers Association (ibpa-online.org), will succeed Firebrand CEO Fran Toolan on February 1, 2023. Toolan, who founded Firebrand as Quality Solutions, Inc. in 1987, passes the reins to Bole after 35 years as the company’s sole CEO. He will remain on the Firebrand Group Board of Directors post transition.

Upon launching Firebrand Technologies, Toolan understood that the publishing industry was a unique and creative business that needed efficient tools and workflow processes to thrive and be profitable. “These tools must accentuate the creativity in publishing,” he said at the time, “not hinder it.”

Today, the Firebrand Group includes Firebrand Technologies, NetGalley, and Supadu. Firebrand Technologies Title Management Enterprise Software and Eloquence on Demand service headline a group
of technologies that help publishers track and manage titles from pre-acquisition through their long tail of sales. **NetGalley** helps provide excitement about titles by connecting eBook and audio content with reviewers. And the newest addition to the Firebrand family of services, **Supadu**, is the leading provider of publisher e-commerce solutions in the US and UK.

In February 2021, **Firebrand was acquired by Media Do International (MD-i)**, the US-based subsidiary of Japan’s Media Do Co., Ltd, one of the largest eBook distribution companies in the world, retaining the largest share of Japan’s $4.5 billion eBook market.

“With the support of MD-i, the Firebrand Group is growing and innovating at an unparalleled rate of speed,” said Toolan. “The opportunities in front of us are very exciting, and I’m equally excited that Angela will be here to guide us going forward.”

Said Daihei Shiohama, CEO of MD-i: “Both here and in Japan, we are so excited to have Angela succeed Fran. We are determined to provide utmost support to Firebrand Group with Angela as new CEO. With the annual growth rate of close to 20% in Japan’s digital publishing market where NFT, XR, and other diversified elements stimulate the publishing industry, we are convinced that Angela will lead the group to uplift the global publishing industry’s expansion.”

Bole, a **2019 Publishers Weekly Notable**, began her career at an independent bookstore in Jackson, WY before moving to NYC in 2005 to pursue a Master’s in book publishing from New York University. While in NYC, she held various positions with the Book Industry Study Group (BISG)—including a stint as interim executive director—where she spearheaded research into consumer attitudes toward eBook reading, oversaw initiatives supporting the industry’s transition to ISBN-13, and developed best practices and other documentation for use of the ONIX and EPUB standards. Bole served as treasurer of the International Digital Publishers Forum (IDPF) from 2011 to 2014, before moving to Manhattan Beach, CA to become ED and later CEO of IBPA, where she has stabilized and grown operations for the past nine years.

“During her years leading IBPA, Angela has transformed the organization into the leading association for advocating and supporting the growing community of independent publishers,” said current IBPA Board Chair Karla Olson (Director, Patagonia Books). “During the last two challenging years in particular, Angela made certain IBPA provided innovative and essential member support and increased efforts to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion within all aspects of the association. IBPA will be forever grateful to Angela for her leadership, her vision, and her passion for publishing.”

Bole officially assumes the role of Firebrand Group CEO on February 1, 2023. When asked what she hopes to achieve, she said, “Firebrand has been powering the publishing industry for over 30 years through quality software solutions and a dedicated and committed staff. Given all we’ve learned over the past few years, I hope to build upon what’s already working to enable even more efficiencies for the companies Firebrand serves. I know this will be a team effort; I couldn’t be more excited to join and lead the team.”
La Jolla Writer’s Conference  
Nov 4–6, 2022, San Diego, CA  
Save the date! Go to LaJollaWritersConference.com to get the details as they develop.

Publishing University  
May 4–6, 2023, Coronado Island Marriott Resort and Spa, San Diego, CA  
Excited it’s going to be in our home town! Save the date and Click here for more information about the resort, and visit PublishingUniversity.org in the coming months for updates as they develop.

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join the conversation!
Have more resources to share? Please email them to Newsletter Editor Glenna Bloemen at gab11853@aol.com, and we will be happy to include them in this list.

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