

# The Beautiful Plan

~ Publishing Strategies from Patron Saint Productions ~

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## Booksellers' Worst Nightmare?

# Kinko's: Bookstore of the Future

By Steve O'Keefe

Coming soon to a bookstore near you: a digital book-building machine that spits out a single copy of a trade paperback book — bound in a four-color cover and indistinguishable from a conventionally-printed copy — in a matter of minutes.

What that means for bookstores is that, for the majority of backlist titles on their shelves, they will pay to download and print one copy of the book for display, and customers will take a barcoded ticket to the checkout counter to purchase a freshly-minted copy, just as they now take barcoded tickets to the checkout counter at Office Depot to buy toner cartridges for their laser printers.



The bookstore of the future is a display case of books, with piles of conventionally-printed frontlist prominently displayed and sold by the dozen, and shelves and shelves of backlist — one copy of each book — with barcoded tickets inside the front cover for anyone who cares to purchase a copy.

Can't find what you're looking for on the shelf or don't have time to browse? No problem! Just step up to one of the many self-service kiosks, search through a database of millions of titles, swipe your debit card, and your books or journals or white papers will be waiting at the pick-up desk faster than you can say "skinny grande decaf double cappuccino."



The bookstore of the future will have a meeting room that is, well, *booked* most hours of the day and night with presentations. At night, it's used by touring authors giving a reading or talk. During the day, it's a classroom where teachers plug their laptops into an overhead projector and instruct on every subject under the sun — with the bookstore providing the training materials (software, books, manuals, forms, and so on). Sometimes the room will be used as a meeting place by local reading groups, political groups, non-profit associations, or other organizations. Sometimes it will be used for cooking demonstrations.

Scattered throughout the bookstore will be comfortable chairs for sitting and reading. If you'd rather do your homework, get some work done, or check your e-mail, the bookstore of the future will rent you a computerized cubicle. Just swipe your debit card into the reader on the side of the machine. If you want to print anything you find online, no problem! You can

gather your printing at the pick-up desk faster than you can say, "How could I possibly have been online for an hour and forty-five minutes?"



The bookstore of the future will offer free delivery — and pick-up. Choose from the morning run, the afternoon run, or tomorrow. The bookstore of the future will give you a two-dollar credit for every book you turn in, because the bookstore of the future will have auction sites on eBay and Amazon where it unloads (er, sells) used inventory, shopworn display copies, and any overstock it's stuck with when frontlist was purchased non-returnable or when auctioning the overstock is more profitable than returning it for credit.

The bookstore of the future will be part of a giant global network of bookstores of the future (also known as BookSense) which manages a database of titles available for printing, an auction database, and a database of booksellers. Online shoppers will be able to choose any book they like, and either have it mailed to them, held at the nearest bookstore for pick-up, or delivered by the nearest bookstore or copy shop offering free delivery.

The bookstore of the future is part library, part school, part restaurant, part print shop, part meet market, part delivery service. And it's coming soon to a shopping district near you!



# Publishing Strategies for The Bookstore of the Future

## Step 1: Design a Great Cover

In the near future, half of all books will be sold to consumers *before* they ever see the book. What they'll see is the cover, endorsements or reviews, ads, and excerpts. But they won't see the actual book until after they've paid for it. So, the cover had better look good.

## Step 2: Produce Galleys with a Digital Printer

Galleys will be used the same way they always have been: for sales reps, to garner endorsements, to shop rights, and to provide adequate lead time to trade and media contacts who need to evaluate books months ahead of publication.

## Step 3: Use Conventional Offset for First Printing

Publishers who anticipate needing more than 500 copies of a book in the first year of publication are better off gambling that a book will sell out the first press run. They should accept the capital investment required for a first printing and take advantage of the economies of scale offered by offset. Books need to be in stock where customers want to buy them when the marketing and publicity effort hits. You can't get this kind of bookstore shelving today with P.O.D.

## Step 4: If the Book Flies, Go Back to Press

Keep printing using conventional offset methods until the book shows signs of losing steam. Shop the rights like crazy.

## Step 5: If the Book Bombs, Auction Returns

Set up your own site on eBay or Amazon and sell off your returns at a steep discount. Frequently, author royalties are not paid on copies sold at very high discount.

## Step 6: Print Short-Run Backlist with POD

The POD edition is non-returnable. Most books will be priced "per download" to a book printing machine.

## An Alternative Strategy for POD Publishers

The primary advantage of POD publishing is also the primary disadvantage: no inventory. If the book is not available for browsing in bookstores, you will lose many if not most sales.

If a bookstore has its own book printing machine, let them download and print the first copy free — for use as a reading copy and/or display copy. Then charge for any additional downloads.

This "first copy free" strategy distributes the capital cost of book production between three parties: the publisher loses the gross margin, the author loses the royalty, and the bookstore pays for the paper and binding. The big losers are the Post Office and UPS: nothing ventured, nothing returned.



## Invasion, continued from Page 3.

digital printing technologies to produce small press runs, but he is in no way an evangelist for POD.

Poynter is the author of *The Self-Publishing Manual*, currently in its 13th edition from Para Publishing. When POD People call me, I refer them to Poynter's book or Gary Michael Smith's *Publishing for Small Press Runs* (Chatgris Press), and suggest they follow them "like Bibles." Sometimes that gets me off the hook, but like other publishing professionals, I am usually forced into a choice between wasting hours with POD People explaining why it would be foolish to purchase publicity services for a book no one can buy, or being rude ("I don't have time to teach you the history of book publishing so that you understand why I can't help you").



## A cottage industry is growing to help POD authors become publishers.

Until it flourishes, my advice to POD People is to treat the POD edition of their books as bound galleys, and then follow the advice of Dan Poynter, Judith Appelbaum, Tom & Marilyn Ross, and the other gurus of self-publishing. To achieve any kind of marketing success, they will need to print and give away several hundred copies of their books. So they should ask their current POD firm for a quote, get quotes from other printers, and find out if they can get electronic copies of their own books to send to different printers.

In most cases, the best thing that could happen to a POD Person is getting their book picked-up by a conventional publisher who knows how to print, distribute, market, and sell effectively. Otherwise, with a lot of hard work and a little luck, they may sell enough copies to cross that bridge between author and publisher, and find themselves in a pleasant new profession. Then I'll send my POD People their way for advice.



## Publicists' Worst Nightmare?

# Invasion of the POD People!

By Steve O'Keefe

They arrive by e-mail mostly — sometimes two or three a day. Occasionally, they brave the telephone. Rarely, if ever, do they use the post. They are the POD People — authors with no infrastructure attached. They insinuate themselves between you and your work day, latching onto your time and leeching off your experience. They are immune to the brush off.

Book publicists are enduring a plague of the POD People. Book marketers, too. Literary agents are surrounded by them. Acquisitions editors have to beat them off with a stick. Reviewers are up to their knees in PODs. Bookstores fumigate to keep them out. A legion of parasites has descended upon the publishing profession. All of them hungry for knowledge, wanting to know what they can do to get attention for their books, wanting to know what *you* can do to generate sales.

Whether they wear the brand of Xlibris, iUniverse, 1stBooks, or some other e-vanity press, the POD people have all come to realize one unsettling truth: either they don't have the resources to find an audience for their books or, if they do, they shouldn't have become POD People in the first place. They are stuck in a Publishing Twilight Zone, condemned to wander the trade looking for someone who will comfort them, nurture them, show them the way out of this terrible dilemma. Often, they find me.



Last week, I spent nearly two hours on the phone with a POD person. He had sent me PDFs. He phoned for an ap-

pointment. He is a friend of a friend, so I knew I wouldn't be able to ignore his pleas for help. Like most POD People, he expected me to snap to — I am a vendor, after all, and he is a potential customer. I have an unwritten obligation to court his business and bear the cost of that courting. He wants to know why he should spend \$3,000 with me to promote his book. My answer, of course, is he shouldn't.

I start with the finish line: could someone buy your book if they wanted to? Let's see: Is it available through Amazon? "No." How about Barnes & Noble Online? "No." Any online bookseller? "You can buy it through my web site." Really? With a credit card or debit card? "No." How much are your shipping charges? "I haven't decided yet." Do you ship overseas? "I'd be willing to." What forms of payment do you accept from overseas customers? Silence.

Okay, let's take a step back in the retailing chain. Is the title available from Ingram? "No." Does Baker & Taylor list the title? "What's Baker & Taylor?" Have you tried to purchase your own book through a bookstore? "No." What do you think bookstore clerks will tell people who ask for your book? "I don't know." How about, "Sorry, that title is not available." "Really?" Yes. So let's say I generate a lot of attention for your book. I get journalists to review it, and I sprinkle excerpts all over the Internet, and people like what they see and want to buy the book. How are you going to capture those sales? "That's what I'm hoping you'll help me with."

The biggest problem with POD People is that they have entered the publishing profession in




the middle (production), and they can't reach the end (sales) without going back to the beginning (planning). They want to be authors, but they have *de facto* become publishers, and for the most part they don't know anything about publishing, nor do they want to learn. But once their book is published, they do want it to get reviewed and they do want it to sell, so they're willing to learn about publishing — they just aren't willing to pay for it. So it's up to me and bookstore clerks and book reviewers and literary agents and acquisitions editors to teach these novices the hard lessons of the publishing profession.

"I tell them to get my book," Judith Appelbaum confided in a recent interview. Appelbaum is the author of *How to Get Happily Published, Fifth Edition* (HarperPerennial) and the proprietor of Sensible Solutions, a book marketing firm. "POD is a danger to writers," she said, "because it reinforces the myth that *production* is the same as *publication*. Unless they understand the business and marketing activities, it's just another form of vanity press."

At Publishers Marketing Association's Publishers University, held prior to the Book Expo America in New York, I asked Dan Poynter what he thought of POD. "It doesn't make sense," he said, referring to the initial publication of a new book. "You have to give away 500 copies anyway, you should get them printed as inexpensively as possible." I had considered Poynter to be one of the champions of POD publishing, but that shows my own ignorance and confusion over terms. He's very positive about using

See "Invasion," Page 2.

PUBLISHING PORTAL

# PublishersMarketplace Well Stocked

PublishersMarketplace is the companion web site to Michael Cader's popular gossip zine, *PublishersLunch*. If you haven't tasted *PublishersLunch* yet, we highly recommend it. Every day, Michael Cader, president of book packager Cader Books, dishes up paragraph portions of publishing news spiced with insightful and sometimes deliciously sarcastic commentary.

Cader's latest effort is PublishersMarketplace(PM), a publishing resource center that offers some free content, but makes most of its wares available only by subscription at \$15/month. Patron Saint Productions recently took a tour of the site, and here's our report.

## Contacts Database

The most valuable feature of PM is the database of contacts. It's a *Who's Who* of book publishing professionals, containing contact information such as job titles, e-mail addresses, and direct phone lines for thousands of industry insiders. We have never seen this depth of data in any other publishing directory. For example, searching for "Editors" at "Random House" produced an astounding 86 matches! Even more impressive is the high level of accuracy in a profession that constantly plays musical cubicles.

The main defect in the database is the lack of mailing addresses and fax numbers. While this information is readily available elsewhere, it would be nice to have it in one place. Also, having address information would enable searching by city or zip code.

## Deals Database

PM's database of publishing deals is simply stunning. Every day, Cader logs about five new deals into the database. Deals include the results of manuscript auctions, reprint rights auctions, movie options, foreign language rights sales, etc. For March of 2002, a total of 159 deals were logged. We don't know of any other place to

find this kind of valuable insider data about the publishing industry.

Patron Saint Productions used the deals database recently to help a client prepare a book proposal. We were able to get a list of deals made by HarperBusiness and other publishers in the past two years. Each entry told the names of the agents and editors involved, estimates of the amount of money changing hands and, best of all, contact e-mail addresses. Using this data, our client was able to zero-in on a handful of agents and acquisitions editors to pitch his proposal to, with detailed intelligence about recent deals they had done. This kind of information is priceless to agents and authors, who not surprisingly the biggest paying constituency for PM.

## Publishers Marketplace

### Members

In an interview at the BEA, Cader was cagey about how many paying members PM has. Playing with the site, we were able to find 300 member listings — but that number is misleading. Members can have multiple listings, and most do. Also, members are only listed if they have set-up a web page (free with membership).

Of the 300 member listings on PM, roughly one-third were agents and one third were writers. Publishers and editors combined for 35 listings, about the same as consultants and marketing people. The free web pages that come with membership are simple, cleanly designed and easy to build.

### Rights Board

PublishersMarketplace offers a board to list properties for sale. When we reviewed the site at the end of

May, there were 114 active offerings. Members can post items on the board for free. Each item gets a two-week run, but can be re-posted indefinitely.

*PublishersLunch* has run notices of properties sold through the rights board, so the rights board works. Exactly how well it works is anyone's guess. But given the quality of the membership of PM, the board provides an inexpensive way to get literary properties in front of buyers. Publishers will want to use the board to offer paperback reprint rights, and P.O.D. authors might find the board a useful way to locate publishers willing to pick up a project that has promise.

### Book Tracker

PM allows members to track the Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble Online rankings for their books, as well as rankings on 11 bestseller lists. This feature seems to be extremely popular with members, perhaps reflecting the high number of authors among PM's ranks. The focus of authors and others on the virtually meaningless Amazon.com rank has been the bane of many a publishing professional. For those who want a stat worth tracking, try Ingram's sales line: (615) 213-6803. Dial the number, key-in the ISBN for any book, and you'll hear how many copies Ingram sold this week, last week, this year and last year. Those are numbers worth tracking!

### Summary

If you are in any way involved in the buying and selling of books, PublishersMarketplace is an extremely useful resource. We highly recommend that you take advantage of the free trial period, and we believe that the subscription price is a fair value. If your need for data is intermittent, you can always cancel and sign-up again the next time you have a project that requires the *deep data satisfaction* found only at PublishersMarketplace.



# Author Rights and POD

The rise of print on demand has caused concern that publishers will use this new tool to put a stranglehold on copyrights, preventing these rights from ever reverting to authors under standard “out of print” clauses in book contracts.

In the good old days of conventionally printed books, publishers had to keep books “in print” or the author could request the rights back. Only a small percentage of the books published every year sell enough copies to stay in print. Many authors have regained rights to works their publishers dropped, and have successfully self-published or placed those rights with new publishers. In a few cases, these reclaimed books have achieved great success under new management.

With POD, however, publishers can prevent the reversion of rights to authors by claiming that the book is “in print,” even though no copies exist for sale in the trade. This can be a huge barrier for authors because publishers often hold much more than the print publication rights. A grant of “all rights” typically gives publishers the audio rights, screenplay rights, foreign language rights, merchandising rights, and other rights either enumerated or bundled in a vague clause such as, “all other formats hereinafter invented.”

In short, publishers can use POD to hold a literary property hostage. In the old days, if a publisher had no luck with a book, honor — if not law — allowed the author to take back the rights and try his or her luck elsewhere. *The Beautiful Plan* went in search of clarification from a few experts on the reversion of rights.

## A Publisher’s Opinion

When presented with this scenario at the Book Expo America, one publisher we talked with thought using POD to prevent reversion was right and just. He complained that authors will secretly negotiate deals for their literary works, then wait for reversion to cash in. The publisher goes through the expense of bringing a book into

print and promoting it and the author, so the publisher deserves a portion of the proceeds from sales of the work in formats covered by the contract.

This publisher sounded like he’d been burned by an author who withheld information about a movie deal (or some big payday) until the rights reverted. He makes the point that publishers are entitled to benefit from these deals, which they had no small hand in making possible.

## What “Good Old Days”?

In an interview with *The Beautiful Plan*, publishing impresario Judith Appelbaum, author of *How to Get Happily Published* and a former managing editor of *Publishers Weekly*, gave a little historical perspective. “The sale of all rights is the result of ignorance on the part of authors,” she said, indicating that authors either need to get educated about publishing contracts or be represented by competent agents in contract negotiations. “But even contracts with limited rights sales often have poor provisions for reversion.” Publishers, it seems, have always been reluctant to hand rights back to authors.

Appelbaum referred us to The Authors Guild for expert guidance. The Guild’s web site offers many suggestions for authors negotiating contracts (<http://www.authorsguild.org>). In the “out of print” clause, the Guild recommends that you “specify that availability through print-on-demand or other electronic or mechanical means alone does not make a book ‘in print.’” And in the “grant of rights” section of the contract, “The Guild recommends limiting the publisher’s exclusive right to publish. An author should be reluctant to grant rights . . . the publisher is not capable of exploiting adequately.”

## Revising Reversion

In an interview with *The Beautiful Plan*, Kay Murray with The Authors Guild echoed Appelbaum’s opinion of The Good Old Days: “Publishers have

typically dragged their heels on reverting.” Murray said that she didn’t know of any existing litigation concerning the use of POD to prevent reversion. That doesn’t mean publishers haven’t tried this tactic — it just means they don’t want to go to court over it. “When publishers have been called on it, they usually back off and reach some sort of compromise with the author,” Murray said.

Murray suggested new wording that authors are using to replace old-fashioned reversion clauses. Instead of reversion happening when a book is “out of print,” contracts now call for reversion when author royalties fall below a threshold level for two consecutive royalty periods. That phrasing eliminates a whole slew of problems with language regarding territories and formats.

A royalty-based reversion clause is also recommended by renowned publishing attorney Ivan Hoffman, whose web site contains numerous free articles that help educate authors and publishers about contracts (<http://www.ivanhoffman.com>). In a piece called “Out Of Print Provisions in Book Contracts,” Hoffman says that the out of print clause “is often best established on the basis of income being received by the author during any given accounting period or periods.”

## All’s Well that Ends Well

Many authors feel helpless in negotiations with publishers, but they don’t have to. There are many good resources available for authors to consult in contract negotiations, and most publishers are willing to at least listen to suggestions. The problem with many publishing deals is that all the negotiating is over front-end issues such as the advance, with little attention paid to the back end — what happens when a book’s sales slow. A contract that contains clear, smooth provisions for the return of rights should please both publisher and author.

# Confessions of an Xlibris Author

By Pat Hartman

Once I realized there was such a thing as print on demand, I contacted three companies that offered paper information packets, because I didn't have my own Internet connection. One sent a coloring book, crayons, and a kitchen sink full of bells and whistles of which I was instinctively suspicious. Another sounded way too complicated — and I got phone calls, always a turnoff. Xlibris sent an actual book, just like what my manuscript would eventually become. This was more like it.

Signing up wasn't difficult. The amount of paperwork was bearable, and they let me send the manuscript on disk, a big plus because I still didn't have a modem. There were a few snags in the process, resolved by my author representative. The proof copy was on paper, absolutely necessary in my situation. At publication time, I got one free hardcover and one free trade paperback.

Xlibris provides a private web page to see when sales are made and where the orders originate. Only problem: it was a very long time before I could access mine. I was given several different passwords, there were phone consultations with my rep, etc. I was using a borrowed computer at the time, and finally an Xlibris tech fingered the problem: the unwillingness of my computer-owning friend to accept cookies.

In this and other ways, Xlibris took for granted a degree of computer sophistication in the customer. Many of us who want to publish are, in our own fields, brilliant, productive, and above all busy — too busy to acquire or desire computer literacy beyond abc.

I like to do business with indies, and wasn't thrilled when Xlibris became a "strategic partner" of Random House, whatever that means. What it meant in this case was, everything changed: service packages, book prices, web site design. I'm of two minds on this. The snobby notion that

self-publishing via print on demand is proof of inferiority. Well, that's a bunch of crap. It's propaganda put out by the gatekeepers. They want me to think if I go the POD route it's tantamount to hanging a leper bell around my own neck. On the other hand, if offered a contract by a traditional publisher I'll certainly give it very positive consideration.

In a magazine article about Xlibris, a gatekeeper type claimed that 80 percent of print on demand books are bought by their own authors. Well, so what? There are only so many relatives you can give your book to for Christmas. Anything over 20 copies, I'd start to suspect that writers are finding their own ways to retail their books, and more power to them. I bought some copies of mine and started planning an event.

What I could do without was all the peripheral stuff Xlibris offered. I already had experts lined up for advice on publicity. I know where to get postcards and bookmarks if I want them. And I wasn't interested in chatting with other writers who probably knew less than I did about how to create a character or make the subject and predicate agree. All I want my print-on-demand house to do is precisely that: put their energy into filling orders in the timeliest possible manner. (After, of course, helping me produce my book exactly the way I want it.)

Then came The Horror. Xlibris summarily switched its payment system to an electronic debit card company. Endless passwords and serial numbers followed. I hated every aspect — the security quiz, the minutiae of pecking long strings of verification numbers on the keyboard, the necessity to learn a whole new vocabulary dealing with fiduciary nuances I'd never had to think about before.

Whether or not electronic funds transfer is a good thing, the bottom line is, it wasn't what I signed up for. These people were making me jump through hoops to get paid a lousy pittance. I emailed a grouchy protest to Xlibris. Maybe other authors did too.

After a whole barnload of aggravation, the decree was reversed and Xlibris went back to issuing checks.

"Never go out of print!" is a major selling point in the POD game, yet it appears that POD outfits can let that disaster happen as readily as mainline publishers. What you need is a fall-back position, something to pass along to a different POD company if your first one poops out. Xlibris, showing perhaps not as much confidence in its own continued existence as I would prefer, came up with an offer. They would sell me a CD-ROM with my book on it, formatted in that special way, and including the cover, for another \$75. What a racket.

The worst thing was the unsearchability of my book. The listing made it into Amazon, Borders and Barnes&Noble, as promised, but there was a problem. You could only find it by asking for it directly. If you searched for words such as "Venice Beach," it wouldn't take you to *Call Someplace Paradise*. I asked my Xlibris rep if something could be done and mounted sporadic attacks on the online bookstores. Eventually one of them answered, saying that keywords for the search process were only taken from titles. But I knew that was nonsense, because if you punched in Venice Beach you'd come up with a slew of novels starring an ex-junkie female auto mechanic/detective, none of which contained the words Venice or Beach in their titles. I'm willing to share the blame for this fiasco. Obviously, at some point in the pre-publication task list, I wasn't paying enough attention. Still, I feel that Xlibris might have been more helpful and explicit in the initial stages.

You can have the most wonderful product in existence, but enabling people to find it is about 36 times as important as its actual content.



*Pat Hartman is the former editor of SALON and author of Call Someplace Paradise, about living in the circus world of Venice Beach, California.*

**TUTORIAL****Finding Online Discussion Groups**

by Steve O'Keefe

**In May, I filled-in for PR Diva Gwendolynn Gawlick**

at PMA's Publishers University in New York, where I taught a class in online book promotion. I explained the importance of locating online discussion groups used by the target audience and offering them an excerpt from the book being promoted. I got several questions about how to find these groups. Here's a little primer.

There are four main types of discussion groups: Usenet Newsgroups, Internet Mailing Lists, Web Site Message Boards, and Commercial Service Forums. These groups come in two flavors: moderated and unmoderated. For moderated boards, send e-mail to the moderator asking permission to post the message and offering a free review copy of your book. Discussion group moderators are actually *media*; that is, they're opinion shapers who control forums important to your target audience. It's a good idea to suck up to them. Unmoderated groups are free-range forums, so just post away and, if you get complaints, refer to the my book, *Complete Guide to Internet Publicity*, for instructions on how to handle them.

**Keywords and Tracking**

Start by making a list of keywords related to the topic of the book. Here's a list of keywords I used for the book *100 Best Stocks to Own for Under \$20* (Dearborn): money, saving, personal finance, stock / stocks, stock market, invest / investing, trading / online trading, mutual fund, broker, risk (investment), retirement (planning), financial planning, NASDAQ, books.

Next, start a document to record where you placed messages. You'll find a Microsoft Word template for a Discussion Group Postings Report in the Resources Section at the Patron Saint Productions web site. Download the template (it's free) and use it to track your postings work.

**Usenet Newsgroups**

These are groups with names such as *alt.books.review* and *rec.arts.dance*. They never require subscription, but some groups are moderated. The best resource for finding these groups is Google Groups <<http://groups.google.com>> — not to be confused with Yahoo Groups, discussed below.

Go to Google Groups and search using your keywords. When you find a newsgroup that looks promising, take a quick peek at the latest postings in the group. Does it look like your posting would fit in? If so, post immediately using Google, or record the name of the group and post later using your own newsreader software.

**Internet Mailing Lists**

These are also called newsletters or e-zines. The best source for finding them is Yahoo Groups <<http://groups.yahoo.com>> and the second best is Topica <<http://www.topica.com>>. Search for mailing lists using your keywords. Target lists with large memberships or that are an exact match for your target audience.

You might be able to post to some lists immediately, without subscribing. In most cases you'll have to subscribe first, then post, follow-up for three days, then unsubscribe. *Warning:* Some mailing lists generate an enormous amount of e-mail. If possible, set your subscription to "daily digest" so you get only one e-mail a day, not hundreds. If you know what you're doing, you can use e-mail filters to quickly sort, file, and delete hundreds of mailing list messages in minutes.

**Web Site Message Boards**

These are also called bulletin boards or threads. Unmoderated boards are usually choked with spam and are a complete waste of time. The best place to search for these boards is



Google <<http://www.google.com>>. Try a search sting like this: "*moderated message board*" *topic*, where *topic* is one of your keywords. Using variations on this theme (try *moderated message threads*, *moderated bulletin board*, etc.), you should be able to quickly find a half-dozen boards. Postings are usually made by filling out a form on the web site — although you might want to get pre-approval by sending your posting via e-mail to the moderator.

**Commercial Service Forums**

These include message boards on America Online, CompuServe, MSN, etc. For finding message boards on AOL, this little tip will save you hours of hunting: use Keyword: "Message Board" to get to the Message Board Search page (it's impossible to find unless you know the keyword). On the web, it's located at <<http://mbsearch.web.aol.com>>. Search using your keywords, and AOL will show you a list of postings that contain those words. This list of postings is your roadmap to discussion groups where people are talking about these topics. Almost any other method of finding discussion groups on AOL is an exercise in frustration.

To find forums on CompuServe, use the GO Word: "Forum Center." That will give you a list of forums sorted by topic. Virtually every forum has public message boards. The only forums you'll want to avoid are those owned by software companies and other firms exclusively for the discussion of their products and services.

I've never posted on MSN, so I can't advise you on message boards there. For best results with any commercial service, post your message from a "native" account, and solicit replies to a native address — for example, post on AOL using an AOL screen name, and solicit responses to your AOL address — not to an e-mail address outside of AOL.

Good luck and happy hunting!

~ About Us ~

# PATRON SAINT PRODUCTIONS, INC.

*com . org . edu*

Patron Saint Productions is a publishing consultancy specializing in online marketing strategy, campaigns, and training. It was founded by Steve O'Keefe, a 20-year book publishing veteran who in the last eight years has launched online marketing campaigns for more than 1000 books and dozens of publishers.

Patron Saint Productions offers a variety of marketing campaigns for single titles, series, imprints, and publishers. Our philosophy is to *go where the traffic is*, building publisher partnerships with web sites that matter to the target audience. In our business dealings, and in the campaigns we design for clients, we try to unite commercial, charitable, and educational partners for the benefit of all involved.

Patron Saint Productions maintains two web sites. Our dot-com site contains descriptions of our prices and services, along with sample documents. Our dot-edu site is The Online Publicity Group at Yahoo. It contains our educational resources, including chat programming, annotated links to top web sites, free templates of essential documents, an article library, and other goodies. We hope you'll check them both out.

## Web Sites:

Patron Saint Productions, Inc.  
<http://www.patronsaintpr.com>

The Online Publicity Group at Yahoo  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/onlinepublicity>

## Staff:

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Steve O'Keefe, Editor  
*The Beautiful Plan*  
 Patron Saint Productions, Inc.  
 4100 Saint Ann St.  
 New Orleans, LA 70119 U.S.A.  
 Phone: 504-488-2114  
 Fax: 504-488-2773  
 E-Mail: [news@patronsaintpr.com](mailto:news@patronsaintpr.com)  
 Web: <http://www.patronsaintpr.com>

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Patron Saint Productions, Inc.  
 4100 Saint Ann Street  
 New Orleans, LA 70119 U.S.A.