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PODCAST  
TRANSCRIPT

## EPISODE 45

# *Talking Author Automations with Stephen Gordon*

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Welcome back to another episode of the Author Revolution Podcast. I'm Carissa Andrews, international bestselling author and CEO of Author Revolution - the author's source for all things rapid releasing.

Stephen Gordon 1:17

you know, the goal is obviously to put all that stuff on autopilot because, you know, the time we don't spend on marketing is more time spent on writing and the more content the more product you create, the bigger your audience is gonna get.



**AUTHOR**  
REVOLUTION

**EPISODE 45: TALKING AUTHOR AUTOMATIONS  
WITH STEPHEN GORDON**

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Carissa Andrews 1:31

Have you ever wondered how you can manage a rapid release schedule while being a solopreneur? Or in this case, entrepreneur? Well, my guest today is here to give you a few insights into doing just that. Stephen Gordon is the founder of email marketing superstars. He is also one of my own marketing mentors, a rapid release mentee, and someone who I can say has become a friend. We've started talking about marketing and books just a little over a year ago when author revolution first became an online Academy and I was just kind of dabbling in venturing into a bigger marketing mindset. Stephen was considering the concept of writing a book or a series, but the idea wasn't fully developed yet. So our various levels of expertise criss crossed, and we've been collaborating on ideas since then. Well, Stephen is working on a series of books and obviously has a love for email marketing and specific thus the email marketing superstars. He is also affectionately known in the online marketing space as the automations guy more than anyone I have ever met. Stephen has a way with automations as he ventures to make not only his business life, but his author life as streamlined as possible. So today, I have brought him on the show to give some insights on how automations just might make your author life a little bit easier. Are you ready? Let's get to it.

All right. Well, welcome Stephen for being here today. Let's talk a little bit about your background and tell my audience a little bit about what you do and how it's going to help them with their author automations

Stephen Gordon 3:00

Okay, so before doing what I'm doing now, I was a program manager for a fortune 50 company. So I managed a bunch of other project managers and make sure that projects got done on time on budget, and all other great stuff. I actually left audiobook I got that point in my life a bite six years ago, where I wanted to do something different. And something I'd always wanted to do was write a novel, I had just completed my English literature degree, felt I was well prepared to go out and express myself through work of fiction.

I wrote a novel and it was awful. I mean, it was genuinely terrible. What I did while I was writing the novel I did out in the mornings in the afternoons, I started taking on freelance marketing work just to pay the bills. You know, I got the right with I go and I'm going to pay this bill. How are we going to do that? And I enjoyed that and I was getting good results for my clients doing that for them. I started off as a jack of all trades doing online marketing work for local businesses, you know, web design you know, some Etsy you some conversion rate optimization, paid traffic with Facebook ads and Google ads, but that can be quite exhausting trying to do all things at the same time just meant I wasn't particularly good at any of them. I always enjoyed the, the words and decide of marketing. So I sort of naturally niche down into email marketing focus, constructing nice, well connected sales funnels around email marketing, but my primary goal was to be an author, so I have no desire to grow, you know, from a marketing Freelancer into an agency. It's always been coming back, you know, to books, but obviously is the work group. I was getting expectations from clients. So clients will say, Hey, you know, what's happening with this campaign? What are the results from this? And that's when I got interested in automation. One of the questions people ask me quite frequently is, how did you know what the ultimate? And it's simple, it is so easy. There are two questions to organize your automations. The first one is, do I hate doing this thing? And the second question is, do I have to do it? And if the answer is yes to both of those that is a great candidate for automation, automation or delegation. Some things can't be automated, but I always go to the automation point first. I like doing the creative part of the marketing. I just didn't like the admin, all the reporting and everything that came along with it. So I started on built different automations where as I create account pins, as I started getting results that this fed into customized dashboards, specifically for clients. I got the the automation to such a stage where that when the emails when I automated obviously, and that they had little links below it, they said hey, if you've any questions about this, click the link.

So they would click the link and they would come back to a chatbot which I have configured, which handled about 99 out of 100 of the queries. No, wait, oh, yeah, I mean, it took a bit of effort to set it up but you know, I got it working.

Carissa Andrews 6:33

Did you do automation before then? Or was that like the jumpstart for you?

Stephen Gordon 6:38

That was that was the big jumpstart. Okay, that was the I never really be motivated before you know, even in even in the corporate environment, cuz it's very different when someone else is paying your bills for you. But when you're self employed, I don't have time to answer those emails. I need the automate those as much as I can.

Carissa Andrews 6:58

Yep, being a solopreneur is very difficult. And that's even the same case for authors.

Stephen Gordon 7:04

And this is, you know, as we have been talking for the best part of a year, NIH, it's been very positive in some ways, because it's, hey, a lot of this automation I can bring with me, I've had to think very seriously about it on the realization that when you're doing the author thing, that's it, it's all on you. It's, it's this direct relationship between you and the and the marketplace. You know, I'm not selling something on behalf of someone else. I'm selling my own stuff, I will be selling my own stuff. And that's an added layer of complexity, but also brings up a bunch more opportunities to do things differently again, through automation.

Carissa Andrews 7:41

For sure, well, and with you, you've got that marketing experience. And I think that's going to be very beneficial to you as you get your books out into the world. So why don't you talk about that a little bit too. So you're in the process of writing your first series.

Now you've written others manuscripts in the past, but what's the experience been like for you so far?

Stephen Gordon 7:57

When I when I made the shift and I I spent some time doing ghost writing work. Because again, I was kind of trying to I was fooling myself really into Hey, this is another stride towards independence. But the ghost writing experience showed me Look, you're capable of doing this. You know, I was able to, you know, structure a good story, but my first love in all honesty, and this is a this is huge click in mindset for me. My first love has always been comic books. I mean, I grew up in the UK during this huge comic revival in the 1980s, where you had writers like, Alan Moore and Grant Morrison and Frank Miller, writing these, you know, legendary graphic novels like watchmen, Batman, Dark Knight Returns Arkham Asylum, these were huge these are the ones that moves comics into the mainstream became You know, it was the genuine start of of comics as a pop culture on it was combination of our conversations and also a comment that I read by the author Chris Fox, and he spoke about, you know, writing to market which doesn't necessarily mean you know, going, I'm writing to, you know, a specific market, it was about finding the market that you're going to enjoy working in. I do like thrillers I do like murder mysteries. I even like romances. You know, one of the one of the nice things about going through the angles literature degree is that it forced me to read I said to my normal genres, and it's, you know, when you go out and you discover some, you know, an amazing diverse collection of authors. I mean, prior to that degree, seven, eight years ago, I was mostly read an old white guys of a mama snow. I was reading Stephen King's and you know, yeah, courbet's and Isaac Asimov's and I was reading those folks. And that was, that's cool. They're, they're fantastic writers. But the degree you know, pushed me out of that comfort zone and said, okay, we want you to try reading this. You know, We want you to try reading the classics. You know, we want you to try reading, you know, diverse, you know, African science fiction. I didn't even know what existed at that time. It was crazy. Sarah and stuff in the room to bite, I'm weaving these books that people go, have you read this? Have you heard of this woman called Margaret Atwood and Piglet on? Like, where have you been?

And I enjoyed all those on what I find was I enjoyed the the huge revival works by the likes of Alan Moore and Grant Morrison. They weren't necessarily writing superhero stories. You know, they were writing, you know, horror stories. They were writing murder mysteries. They were writing thrillers. They were writing detective fiction that just happened to have superheroes in it. That was the huge lightbulb moment. And that was the moment when I thought that's what I want to do. Those are the books I want to write. And that's not dovetailed in nicely because we just started having some conversations. I sort of go on this this company, right? And you're and I remember coming back to you and having the conversation saying, hey, look, you know what? This This thing's kind of hit me. I went for a walk over the past couple of mornings, and I've got nine books in a series in my head. Yeah, that's it. That's it. That's your series on a wind from my heart not being in it too. I need to try and write these quickly. I need to try No. And that's when we start getting into the whole rapid release conversations. I need to write these frankly.

Carissa Andrews 11:28

So that's actually my next question. So we've been talking about marketing and books for like you said over a year now. Have I convinced you then about rapid releasing, or are you still kind of like, Oh, I don't know if I want to do that.

Stephen Gordon 11:42

I think I'm possibly the the guilty of I've been an advocate for rapid release if I'm honest. Because it feels really natural to me. Because again, comics background, really great writers and comic book fiction and and comic book fans out there are going to go on Yes. And everyone else is going to go through, I have no idea what you're talking about. One of the consistencies of comic books is that they will rotate writers off so you don't get you know, a writer on a comic book, you will get occasionally people on like 10 year runs. But that's very rare. And those tend to be exceptionally good. You know, so you get guys like Brian Michael Bendis, who done incredible run on ultimate Spider Man, which was, I think, about 12 years long off the top of my head.

I just finished rereading it and you know, spoilers if you have never read it, and spoiler alert, because it is something I have to talk about, that was essentially banned this essentially get a rapid release. So it was a 12 year long, rapid release with hundreds and hundreds of issues. And the way it worked again, kind of similar to rapid release was bandless told stories in six issue arcs. So with six issues to deal with this story arc, and then the next six issues with dealing with this issue. story arc on this one all the way through right to the finale of the band this broke a rule of comic book writing huge huge spoiler trust me if you're in the spider man and you haven't read it you don't want to listen to this but put me on mute for the next five seconds African Spider Man and I'm not in a ham gonna kill this guy and bring him boxer the way it was done. It was this genuinely heart rending soul destroying emotional roller coaster of a 15 year old Peter Parker essentially getting beaten to death in his front garden by the you know, the Green Goblin and the vulture the Sinister Six on the the incredible thing was about this thing round for like hundred and 86 issues off the top of my head. And he forecast that back in book one. You know, the first issue of it, he forked it kind of foreshadowed it. They're all the way through the end and you just go on did how did you do that? And as we get talking about Robert release and you are just that concept of climbing not series you know so it's no don't go into the Series Blind you know yeah have have that outline not not usually detailed because I know the pantsers are going no, that's sacrilege.

Carissa Andrews 14:21  
yes

Stephen Gordon 14:22  
the easiest equation I can make it to was back in my corporate days as a as a project manager and a program manager we did the same we have his plan the work work the plan, and you can only plan so much I mean, we planned you know, start middle and end of a project and life has this way of just mess everything up. Yes, you know, it's just gonna come along and it's just gonna go dude, that thing master all up.

And that was okay because the plan was always flexible enough. You know, to adjust for that and to get things done. On I'm nicing with the process of rapid release all Okay, so this is the series No, so I mentioned a name book series. It's actually three. It's three trilogies, there's probably name for that. I don't know what it is how to find out. Alright. trilogies. tri children, double double trilogy? I don't know. No, no, that's gonna bug we're gonna go off topic. But I really struggled at the start. And this is a relatively recent thing. Because again, it's something that you spoke about. Now, that concept of these multiple books are like having kids of different ages, and not just click something in my head again. I was going okay, I'm going to play on the side. I have, you know, I know what happens at the end what happens at the start of each trilogy? I know what happens at the end of each trilogy. I know who the protagonist is, I know who the antagonist is. I nine oh, hi, each book finishes, but I've got plenty of flexibility to go okay, I can know stuff may change and I can jump back to the first book and you don't have to The plan a little bit. On an average day, I'll do about 5000 words over a few hours. Because I just I find with the plan without rapid release approach, I just had a few steps on through an on a really, really good day. 10,000 words isn't uncommon.

Carissa Andrews 16:16  
Nice. That's fantastic.

Stephen Gordon 16:19

And that's a huge contrast of before where I would sit down and I would struggle to do like 300 words, like, oh, because I was trying to, I was trying to write a scene, like plotting the whole series in my head, as opposed to I've now got the plot of a series clown there. So I mean, I'm a huge convert this concept of rapid release because it's, you know, the plan is that, you know, here's the first trilogy. Here's, you know, here's the first book in January 2 book and February 3 book in March on if I'm working the plan properly. I'm looking at getting each trilogy I come from a nice quality, at least one trilogy, you Which I'm happy with. If I get more I create.



Carissa Andrews 17:05

I think that's fantastic. I mean, I truly when you think about it three books a year, especially as you're just getting started, that's a huge undertaking. And when I did two books, it was enough to make my brain kind of explode when I did that in 2017. I was like, never again, never again, will I do that. And then of course, then each year, you just get like, no, let's try like three this time or no for this time. And now I'm up to five, you just get crazier as the time goes. But I think a trilogy is it's manageable to do each year and it's not so much that you're going to overwhelm yourself, you know what I mean? In the beginning, middle or end because you're going to be able to handle each of those three, and all the marketing side of it. I mean, you've got the marketing down way more than even I do. And so, I think for you, that's going to be a much easier task and something that you're going to really enjoy because it's kind of in your wheelhouse, but I know a lot of authors who just are are not, not a fan of the marketing side.

Stephen Gordon 18:00

Yeah, and it's, it's less about my own experience of this. But it's more I've been doing this for quite a bit for other authors. I, you know, I read a lot of stuff everyone talks about, it's the heart of the marketing process for authors. You know, it's low cost, it's really effective. No, it's a great way of building a relationship with readers. And there's so many courses out there, which say, here's how you do email marketing. And you know, what's actually kind of easy, because with email marketing, it's about prep. And this is where the automation comes in. So, you know, I would say, I'd have, I'd say, 99. Actually, no, I'll actually say 100% of the authors that I've worked with when I go to talk to her but the email marketing side of their business, you know, they don't even have a work and form for people to sign up on the ones that do. It's, you know, someone will sign up on the Maybe, maybe not always the maybe get an email which says, Hey, welcome to my mailing list. And then that's it. And then And you know, various authors will then sit and complain and go, Oh, I don't know what the right have missed this week and have missed that week. And one of the things that I always say to the authors is, there's a couple of different terms for it. Some people call a Seinfeld sequence.

Some people call it shadow newsletter. What I always encourage authors I work with is to set up a six to 13 week series of emails. So once a week, short emails, when someone signs up, they get that first email, which says, Hey, thanks for setting up in my list. And then over the next 13 weeks, they are guaranteed this person is going to get an email from their pre written on there based around you know, so with me, you know, as I as I expand my night as I have a book getting ready, as I want people to sign up to my author mailing list, you know, they're going to get a sequence of 13 meals talking, funnily enough about different superhero things. Yeah. So I'm going to talk about I'm actually sitting right. And these are the moments, you know. So I talk about, you know, here's my top five graphic novels. You know, here's my five favorite comic writers. Here's my five favorite comic artists. And I actually just got a little spreadsheet and brainstorm the ideas what I put into this. And because I'm talking about superheroes, I went back on the spreadsheet have 37 topics honest, I've never, there's 3737 weeks worth of content. Awesome. I mentioned the book in there yet, which is crazy. Because I don't need to. And again, something that I've done with authors is, you know, I've worked with authors, I'm sure they'll send up some author mailing lists where we've signed up when people go buy my book, buy my book, buy my book, you know, it's just like five, you know, five to 10 emails just consecutively going, have you bought my book yet? Whereas with an automated sequence in place, you know, talking about anything about your books, it builds up that relationship. You've got that opportunity you can put in a, what I found works really well. No, this is not by email marketing. But again, it's an element of automation. And it works really well on the non seals emails with the relationship building emails is just, you know, having that that single signature block at the bottom with a little button or a little line which says, you know, click here for my backlist taking someone across the page, or we bring them back during webpage kids. Don't just take someone back to your webpage with your bibliography and making it look nice and pretty. I'm not the guy to talk to avoid that.

But making it look nice and pretty with covers in chronological order and story arcs and all the rest of that great stuff that will help sell books because you're building that relationship on them. People are also going to go I like hearing from Stephen I like hearing from Chris, I like hearing from you on you know when they're in between books. They're going to click in they're going to get your newsletter on they're going to click on and go oh I'll give this a try. Oh Buddha this series, so you may not make that seal in the first couple of emails. But if you develop a habit with someone where they're constantly opening up the emails, that's awesome.

Carissa Andrews 22:11

A lot of authors know that as a nurture sequence to right.

Stephen Gordon 22:15

Yes. Okay. That's a term it was. It's a lot of people are going on again, I don't want to make this an email marketing discussion. But I know a lot of folks go, I don't know what to write about. And it's always so easy, because talk about your genre, you know, talk about other people's books that you think are great talk about, you know, cuz I know, you've got some with the windhaven work coming up, or the windhaven release coming up. You know, it's a huge Academy series. You know, I'm buying there a couple of weeks ago, you know, new release of the umbrella Academy, it's in the medium,

Carissa Andrews 22:49

Right.

Stephen Gordon 22:51

So spoilt for choice. There's so much content. I must admit, I've been kind of already spoiled at the moment because Marvel's doing all my promo work for me and I'm just going and saying, hey, Look, there's this new thing from Marvel or from DC. And, you know, my quick thing that I've been chatting about with people about as I'm in the boards and the groups and again, feeding into the nurture sequence that I'm building.

And, you know, I'm talking about, Hey, you know, here's the chronological order for you're watching the Marvel movies. You know, hey, this release is coming out. Have you seen the found them releases? I mean, it's all brilliant. And it's all content. I'm just kidding. No, listen, it's evergreen content, because I can say, you know, here's my great deinove, then you share site Squad movie, because all I have to do is after a period of time, I just take out the word union, here's my breakdown of suicide school, you know, right, compare the two, it's just all content, you know, so content within your genre is always there. It's a lovely thing, because I have one author in particular, who was a murder mystery author, who I wrote a 20 week nurture sequence for and it was sort of peppered with her books in there, but you know, it was she's a huge Agatha Christie. Fine. I mean, she's a massive Agatha Christie. Um, you know, within that, within that 20 email sequence, she was encouraging a, almost like a book club of, you know, the highlights of the Agatha Christie series of books, you know, once you have poles in there and who's better, you know, Miss Marple, or Pyro, you know, it was great on, you know, she just saw this constant rise, and she got a contact a few weeks ago. And when I completely forgot about my nurture sequence. Sure, I completely forgot about it. It was just, you know, she just sent her emails each week. And she moved from her old mailing list in human and couldn't understand why her seals dropped because she didn't bring the nurture sequence across with her.

Carissa Andrews 24:39

Oh, my goodness, that actually brings up a really good point then. So as an emerging author, and for someone who's obviously considering rapid release, or to any of those new authors who are coming in, would you say then that your automated sequence your nurture sequence is the first thing that you should start with when it comes to automation? Or is there something else that you would start with first

Stephen Gordon 25:01

If I'm sort of going right back to the start, so that's heavy on marketing. I'll jump to the start in a second.

The one thing which I would definitely recommend for marketing is you're going to have all these different marketing pieces going on. Now so you'll have Facebook ads should how Facebook ads, you'll have your website, you will have Amazon ads, you'll have ads on maintaining those who never mind building them, maintaining those is going to dream. There's also a fantastic opportunity and again, it's with an automation um, this always amazes me because not a lot of authors or the courses talk about this is that if you've invested money and you've got someone through a Facebook ad, no one retargets and again, it's another form of automation where if you're running a Facebook campaign and usually at or if you're getting a football sequence going night where all of these things should be bringing everyone back to your website to set up a retargeting sequence. And what I always encourage is when you have all these pieces is really easy to get lost. This sort of comes from my first experience with automation, set up automated reporting as quickly as you can. It doesn't matter if you're just sending everything to a spreadsheet. I personally use a tool called Google Data Studio. It's free. It's a little bit fiddly to set up, but it is crazy powerful. On what Google Data Studio lets you do is you can send all your odd spam, you can send all your odd results, how many visitors you're getting to your website. The only one that it doesn't let you do at the moment is Amazon ads but I've been told that Amazon's going to open up their API to let you do that. So rather than sitting there on freakin I all the time on go on how much have I spent on this and my selling books you know, what's my read three read you can get a lot This by automating your reporting so that everything goes to this dashboard. So when as an author, you can flip it over and look at it and go, Okay, I'm seeing this much traffic going to my website, these ads are performing like this. And it essentially shows you all the way up to and it stops. Unfortunately at the moment, you can configure your reporting dashboard to show your sales funnel. So a very sort of simplistic version of it would be if you're running Facebook ads for a giveaway for your first book, which brings people to your website, where they sign up where they get their first book, where you have I bachmeier link that then clicks through the Amazon.

You can have all of that going through to a dashboard where you can see okay, so without Facebook conversion cost me 75 cents, you know, so you're getting 10 click or 10 cents clicks on it cost you 80 cents if someone's through to the website, and then convert through to downloading the book. You get the CD on the dashboard, where you can say, okay, so I spent 100 bucks on advertising this month, and that sent through 500 people to Amazon for me. And then on a separate screen. It's unfortunate, you can't put it into your dashboards. But you can then go look at Amazon and say, Okay, so how much did I make? And if you really want that, too, you can just transpose the numbers across. And I can say I have spent because I like nice, simple things. So what I like to see in my dashboards is, I have spent 100 bucks in total on advertising this month. I have earned \$1,000 Whoo. That's, that's ideal.

Carissa Andrews 28:38

So where does someone get put their dashboard together? Like, is there an actual location that they would go to then?

Stephen Gordon 28:45

I would recommend starting out with getting everything into Google spreadsheet. Google is wonderful because everything connects to Google. So for example, you know, things like your Google Analytics, things like your Facebook ads, all of that information. can be exported into a Google spreadsheet where and you can automate those exports as well. And then that gives you the chance to go. I've only got one spreadsheet to check and you can start fiddling around with it. Now, if you're feeling a little bit more adventurous, I would definitely recommend checking your product I mentioned before Google Data Studio. Yeah, so Google Data Studio, it's absolutely fantastic. It's it's a highly visual way to graph and chart any data whatsoever. And historically, so as a product, because as Google, things like Google Analytics, on your website, traffic, all of that, obviously, if you're configured for Google Analytics, all of that will feed into Google Data Studio automatically. And then you can pull information out of Google Sheets.

So you know, if you are an author, you could pull down your data from Kimball reporting and this spreadsheet and then it would pull out in the Google Data Studio as well that bits manual, but you'd only need to do it once a week and then it builds up this group ruined growing pitcher where you can go Okay, So show me my ad spam over the last six months on Schumi my shoe my seals and it will pop up in Google Data Studio for you. And it's just magnificent. And by the way, it's free. doesn't cost a penny I knew there's some really great Kindle reporting tools right there. But I think the ones I've seen come with quite a hefty price tag Google Data Studio completely free.

Carissa Andrews 30:28

If we're talking about that. I could also see you as like the Tony Stark of digital information for books just spreading it all out there and trying to figure out what's going on right now.

Stephen Gordon 30:37

I'm all about the ongoing sales you know, so when I go to so and so I have not got to turn you into a millionaire overnight. But if we you know, if we if we do this consistently, you'll be a millionaire in a few years because your series sales really well. It's just not enough people know about it. So in terms of automation from that side, it's no it's about you know, having All our data goes into one place so you can see what's working, what odds are working, what covers are working what blurbs you know having talked with things like split test and and all that other good stuff which can be automated. Again using completely free products from Google where you have you know, if you're driving traffic from your Facebook ads back to your webpage, you know if you're not sure whether cover a or cover B is the best home tick both on there are Google tools which will send half your traffic to one page and a half to the other. And then your report will show you Hey, this is the one which converts the most on book cover a 80% of people click through the Amazon on book cover B only 30% that the cover B's just died to death and right your that's your automated dashboard fitting the information back where again,

it's not sort of almost not Tony Stark ism and yes, I do have just a dedicated large monitor for my stocks because you know, I like to look up and go even to that simplistic sense of, hey, that's green dots, okay, that's going red, I need to go and fix it. And you're building this up over a period of time, you know, so anyone who's sitting out there and going, Oh, this is too loud, it's too complicated. This isn't an overnight thing this is you build your automations up over a period of time, because the first step towards automation is having your processes. So you know, if I go right back to the start, you know, at the moment, I am less about marketing because I scaled down my clients because my focus is on my own work knows and my own books and equipment. I focus on my own work now.

Carissa Andrews 32:36

How dare you clients, get in my way, yes.

Stephen Gordon 32:39

To get my client work right down on for me, it's those reports, you know, right at the start my automations at the moment focus on I just want to write every day. I don't want to have to fiddle about with emails or stuff like that. Unfortunately, I still have to so I have process at the moment where I use a product called Trello. On I have mapped out my process, this is my writing process to rapid release. And I've made some little tweaks in there, you know, the core of is your rapid release approach. But I've got the little tweaks in there because I know that I can be like a big Lizzie child the way certain things sometimes they don't want to do it, don't do it. So, one of the joys of being 47 is I know my feelings. As I'm working on these books. I also that I am an easily distracted procrastinator, that as I'm getting to the heart of something, you know, a new idea will pop up on my head and I'll be your unit start working on this new idea, right nine. Yeah, otherwise it's going to disappear. Again, I've automated myself away from that because I'll pick up my mobile phone or my cell phone. I open up a Google Doc just because it's it can you can do offline notes on that. Open up a Google Doc I topped out the idea so it's fresh in my head. I save it this specific folder and then in the background, I use a tool called Zapier or Zapier, depending where you're coming from.



I always say Zapier because it zaps. I use an automation tool called Zapier. Zapier is essentially a tool which says, I'm going to help these two programs talk to each other. So when I create something on Google Docs can see it in this certain folder. Zapier wakes up and goes, Oh, that's a new story idea. And Zapier picks that up on then puts it in as a card on Trello under a story ideas list, so I never lose story ideas, you know, sort of it's three o'clock in the morning, and I wake up with the bestest story in the world ever. It's the most fantastic tool that has to be told. I reach over I grab my cell phone, I talk about the idea. I see the Google Docs and then I fall back asleep again. I wake up in the morning and just go I have no idea what that means. You know it's you know, Marvel blue fish, red pepper melt. What?

Carissa Andrews 34:58

I have a question then about that because for me when I have those cool ideas that spark, I have a tendency to do a voice memo instead of writing it down, whether it be in the middle of the night or whenever I'll just leave a quick voice memo to myself, but then I move them over into like Evernote but I do that manually. I don't do it using zaps or anything like that. Is that something that you still do?

Stephen Gordon 35:20

Yes. And again, with this, the voice memo tool that I have voice record Pro, if I do a voice, note it, Zapier, again wakes up, because I have the voice notes set to it's got a client feature functional, our Cloud Function on it. So if I make a recording, it automatically backs it up into a folder in Google Drive for me. Zapier again wakes up and says, Okay, I need to create a card I have an attach to the voice file there as well our LinkedIn voice file. Okay, it's all there. So I would have had that fear, which I guess a lot of authors do have I have this idea and I don't want to forget that on my story ideas thing, I think it's sitting at like 35 you know, and this is still relatively new. So I'm still going through all my old files, but it's similar my 35 story ideas on I have that comfort and not internal peace, to be quite honest, where I never missing an idea.

And then once I get to the end all you know, once I get through the try trilogy, I have guess mine of stuff, just setting Whitner going, who's next? No. So another piece of automation is sort of moving to the next step of that is, okay, I want to sit down and write but I want to keep track of it. I also want to, you know, I want to start building an audience john, I'm an author noon is heard off. It's gonna be great in 20 years time from sitting there go to James Patterson, a superhero fiction and they'll be able to go right remember that interview I said, I was the author, no one heard of but you know, that's

Carissa Andrews 36:56

And we'll come back to this one and we'll play it again.

Stephen Gordon 37:00

Oooh, play the greatest hits. but I know one of the things that people are constantly thinking about is, you know, as a, as a first time author writing their first book, or their first trilogy, or their first series, you know, how do I start building that audience. And I want it to, again, honestly, because I hate doing it. And because I'm lazy, I want to find a way of tracking my work, I put the see what, what works best and what doesn't. And obviously, to have a better motivation. So one of the things I came up with was, it's pretty common for folks to use a word count spreadsheet, but again, I'm lazy, I don't want to have to go in and open up Google Drive and fill up and find the folder. So what I have is a link to a form that's on my cell phone and it's on the desktop of my laptop. On what I do is I do my writing for the day and I do my word count by writing or how many words I've added it on when I've done that when I've hit the point where I'm burned it My brain just will not create anymore. I will shut that dine on I click a link, it opens up a form to my website and it says, How many words have you written today? How many words have you added today? And then it asked me a couple of questions which are random it will ask me questions. Hey, what worked really well today what didn't work so well today, I will just top all this site and I will fill it essentially fill out a form. And then I hit Submit on it goes in auto generates a post on my website for me and it says hey, Steven, you this many words today, you get this many words today.

And then it's little notes from myself that are kind of out there, which I'm experimenting the private post at the moment, but I'm about to switch in the public. And it's essentially a way of looking back and going hey, this worked really well. This worked really well. On one of the things that I know people love is Hey, what's working, you know, people love that behind the scenes thing and I'm we're not talking big, massive long blog posts. We're talking you know, we're talking maybe a couple hundred words at most Hey, this worked really well, this didn't work really well split my grand today. And now I'm starting to look back at those entries, which is a minute or going into a Google Sheet. But whenever I get the courage, the motivation, I will switch that across. So it posts automatically on my website. So it's constantly filling up content, you know, and then I can start sharing that right on again, because of automation. Because we love automation. When it hits that there's little timers will go off, which will then go Okay, so now I put this into my Facebook page.

Carissa Andrews 39:32

I was wondering if that would be the case. I would that was gonna be my next question. That's awesome.

Stephen Gordon 39:37

Everything is content. So anyone that's out there at the moment gone. I'd like to create this or I'd like to do videos. It's create the content and then put the automated systems and the just shut that stuff off everywhere. It keeps falling back on this. Do you hate doing it? Do you have to do it? If the answer is yes to both of those look for ways to automate it. So

Carissa Andrews 39:58

that's really their starting point. Rather than getting overwhelmed and trying to get all the automations done at once, just start with the one thing that's really irritating you right now automate that one thing and then just continue to build it out. Right?



Well, there you have it. As you can see, Stephen knows a lot when it comes to marketing and automations. We covered a lot, and rest assured, I will make sure there are links in today's show notes - which can be found at [authorrevolution.org/45](http://authorrevolution.org/45)

Alright, you know the drill. Let's take this discussion online. Hop over to the Author Revolution Facebook Group and let's talk about automations. Have you asked yourself the two big questions Stephen Gordon suggests? If so, what areas of your author life are you going to work on automating?

A final reminder: this podcast episode is sponsored by the Windhaven Witches. The Windhaven Witches is a rapid release series that will be coming at you, starting September 15th. If you're a fan of the supernatural, mysteries, and mythologies, this is the series for you. Secret Legacy, Book 1, is only 99¢ wherever books are sold - ebook form, of course. In addition, 50% of the royalties from that book are being donated to the American Cancer Society. Head over to Amazon, Barnes & Noble, or Apple iBooks today to preorder your copy.

Alright my writerly friend, I hope you enjoyed today's interview. I know I did. Until next time... Go forth and start your author revolution.



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