

EPISODE 50

How Do You Test the Rapid Release Waters?

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Welcome to the Author Revolution Podcast. I'm your host, international bestselling indie author, Carissa Andrews – and CEO of Author Revolution, the indie author's hub for learning how to create a bestselling series.

When was the first time you ever heard of rapid releasing? Do you remember? Was it a year ago? A month ago? Today in this podcast? HA! I first heard the term rapid releasing about five years ago, but I was familiar with the concept even before that, though it didn't really have a name. Amanda Hocking, a fellow native Minnesotan I might add, broke through a noisy online market space and started earning 6 and then 7 figures for herself by writing and releasing her books quickly. She began publishing her books in March of 2010 and by the end of the year, she had rapid released six titles. While the term rapid releasing hadn't become quite so concrete, I'm sure news outlets probably marveled at her speed and used descriptors that were very similar.

Amanda Hocking's success inspired me to consider indie publishing. To give you some perspective, I was writing Pendomus in October of 2010. However, I still wasn't completely sold on the endeavor of self-publishing. That actually came a couple of years later. At the time, self-publishing was far less mainstream and more closely associated with guys trying to pawn their books from the trunks of their car, if you get what I mean. No one was taking it seriously just yet.



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However, I can tell you that from the moment I heard about rapid releasing as a concept, I knew it made perfect sense from a business perspective. It's all about eggs in baskets. The more eggs you have, the safer you'll be. And we can all use a little safety right now, don't you think?

But the real question boils down to... how do you even get there? How do you get to the point where you can speed up your creativity, let words flow onto a page, and deliver books on a consistent timeframe?

Well, in my experience, it comes down to walking before you run. You need to hone your craft so you're not getting tripped up over story creation. Knowing how to perfect your characters, story arcs, and theme come with experience and the only way to build experience is by doing.

We're currently sitting in the most perfect timeframe to dip your toe into rapid releasing. In fact, if I had to tell you the very VERY first time my eyes were opened to the concept that I could write a book quickly, it was a full ten years ago, and had nothing to do with Amanda Hocking. It had everything to do with a little thing called NaNoWriMo.

Yes, my friends, it's that time of year again. National Novel Writing Month is coming up in just a few weeks and in my humble opinion, it's THE SINGLE best way to dip your toes into the world of rapid releasing.

Why? Because the whole concept of NaNoWriMo (or National Novel Writing Month for you newbies) has to do with writing the first draft of a novel in a month. 10 years ago, this was a shocking concept to me. Write a novel in a month? Are they MAD?!

Of course, that's when my competitive streak kicked in and I was like... mwahaha, I'm gonna do it. And you know what? As a 100% newbie writer - I had never written a book in my life - I hit the 50K wordcount mark (which is the NaNoWriMo goal) and kept going!

My finished first draft came in at around 105K words. Of course, it was edited back to about 72K, but the point was, I hit 50K words in a month and finished a full novel in 3. I probably would have been faster had Thanksgiving and Christmas not fallen in there, but you know... it happens.

Does that mean it was perfect? Hell no! I was a newbie writer, remember. I fumbled around with what to do afterward. I didn't even know if I'd done it right! Did I have a story arc? What's a protagonist again? Climax? Resolution? What are these words they speak at me with?

Thankfully, since then, I have only gotten better, faster, and more adept at writing fiction. You will, too. But you have to start somewhere.

Now, one of the biggest reasons I think NaNoWriMo is such a huge win for people who want to rapid release, especially if they're just starting out, too – is because it can boost their confidence as a writer. And that's really what all of us are looking for, right? Encouragement that we can succeed at something we enjoy?

It was certainly that for me. When I finished NaNoWriMo 2010 and hit that 50K goal, I knew I could do this. I knew I could write and publish quickly – especially when I got my cats herded and learned the craft a bit better.

As of the recording of this episode, we're sitting in the middle of October – October 13th, to be exact. That places us smack-dab in the middle of what the NaNo peeps call PrepTober.

If you're looking for some tips on how to take on NaNoWriMo, check out the episode I did last year called 5 Tips to Take on NaNoWriMo. You can find it at authorrevolution.org/2 or head over to today's show notes and I'll have a link for you there, too. In it, we talk about 5 tips so you can get yourself ready for the challenge of NaNo.

In addition, you can also head over to <https://nanowrimo.org/> and go to the Writer's Resources tab for a whole host of information that can help you plan and prep your NaNoWriMo novel. Whatever your biggest prep challenge, you'll likely find something in there that can help you!

Now, what about for those of you who are old hats at writing? Does NaNoWriMo still help you? Well, allow me to lay out my plans and you can decide for yourself.

First, before I start in on this year's plans, though, I will say that of the 10 years I've been writing professionally, I have participated in NaNoWriMo 7 times. So, there's that.

Now, last Friday I wrapped up writing the four-part rapid release series, The Windhaven Witches. That means, I'm smack dab in between projects right now, making it the PERFECT TIME to take on NaNo again and get myself in the right mindset to start something new.

My plan is to work on the prep needed to create the next 5 books in the Diana Hawthorne Supernatural Mysteries series. Over the next two to three weeks I'll be doing all the things so I'm ready to hit November with the writing. So, to me, the prep work includes taking each character and expanding their character sheets, developing the story ideas for the series, generating the plots for each book, and skeletal outlining each book. I'll probably do a full outline for Amends, which is the next book, and that means a full chapter-by-chapter synopsis. Normally it wouldn't take me so long to prep, but with the creation of Rapid Release Roadmap also happening, I need to balance my time and not kill myself.

So, to answer that question – does NaNoWriMo help seasoned authors? Obviously, the answer is yes. Every year their resources get better and you'll be able to level up your writing. But more than that, it's an accountability thing.

You can track all of your daily wordcounts and see the graph as it grows. I mean, who doesn't love to see that, right? Plus, you can create writing groups within the platform and invite your besties to it! Or, you can join a local community group and get encouragement and support that way. I've met some really cool people through NaNoWriMo! In normal years, there are usually events going on, too – Write-ins, parties, and much more. There's a ton of ways to make NaNoWriMo a fun month of writing exploration.

Testing the waters of rapid releasing might seem scary at first. But it's far more manageable when you have a whole community doing it with you at the same time. That's part of the reason why NaNoWriMo is such a good way to dabble with the concept and learn how to get yourself focused.

I think I've mentioned this before, but all things get easier the more you do them. With repetition, writing and publishing a book gets faster and faster, if you want it to. So, even if your idea of rapid releasing is a book a year, November is the month to get a big part of the process under way.

Alright, I hope this gives you some insights to mull over and I hope you'll join me in November for NaNoWriMo. You can always be my "buddy" on nanorwimo.org, too. Just search for my name or head over to authorrevolution.org/50 and find the link in the show notes.

I'd also love it if you'd head over to the Author Revolution Online Community Facebook group and tell me what your plans are for November. Will you be taking on NaNoWriMo? And if so, what project are you planning to work on?

Alright my writerly friend, until week... Go forth and start your author revolution.