

[00:00:04] Carissa Andrews: Welcome back to the author. Revolution Podcast. I'm your host International Bestselling indie author Carisa Andrews and CEO of Author Revolution, The India author Source for all Things Rapid Releasing In today's podcast episode, I had the privilege of interviewing again Stephen Garden and this time, rather than talking about automation, which is something he is spectacular at, we ended up talking about author emails and in particular email marketing, because this is something that is a passion of his. So without further ado, let's just head straight into the interview and see what kind of insights and tips he has to offer us. Authors on how we can manage and utilize our email marketing. Welcome Once again. Stephen Gordon to the author Revolution Podcast We're so happy to have you here. Hello, So today we're gonna be talking about some fun stuff, right? Email marketing

[00:01:10] Stephen Gordon: The best thing in the world. There's a reason I get in the email marketing, and it is because it is such a great, consistent way off marketing Thio Highly engaged audience.

[00:01:21] Carissa Andrews: Well, it's obviously very important for authors, so

[00:01:24] Stephen Gordon: e mean email marketing for anybody who is completely new to it's essentially just standing commercially meals to someone to buy your product or service.

[00:01:34] Carissa Andrews: So with author email this is there a specific reason that you would say for sure that authors then need them like what should they actually be doing with their emails if they're going to try to pull people into their list?

[00:01:46] Stephen Gordon: Readers really want to engage because they want to know a lot of questions. They wanna know what's next. When's the next book? I, you know? Where do you get your influences? From? A fantastic example is a British comic book writer. I started following his email list about 10 years ago. On it started as you know, Hey, you know, this is an email list. I'm putting Abedin for a story in, You know, in a in a local British comic publication on over the 10 years that that person's email list has just grown, you know, to the point where he's night saying, Hey, you know, I actually almost 20 years where he's you know, the big news today is obviously saying, Hey, you know, we just started shooting the Sandman today, which is Neil Diamond's Milan list.

[00:02:34] Carissa Andrews: Oh my God,

[00:02:36] Stephen Gordon: I'm watching this fledgling stuff go all the way up through where someone is talking about, You know, a nervousness of submitting the first script all the way up through to, you know, hey, you know, with just started shooting A you know, a mega

multimillion dollar Siri's with the biggest streaming service in the world. You know, that's a That's a newsletter I've followed for, as I say, about 20 years, you know, and that's the joy of off email. Marketing for authors is that once you start engaging with someone, it isn't just about sell, sell, sell, sell, sell. You have an opportunity for very low cost to develop a long term relationship. I have cried like a baby, uh, Neil Gaiman's newsletters when he when he spoke about a dog he rescued from the side of the road on I followed that rescue dog journey with him over about six years and then, you know, and it's just like getting, you know, New Game is like a wonderful human being. And then the dog old and you're like the dog is Dad, you know, it was you gotta You gotta strong emotional connection with someone you know, which is why You know, I have pretty much everything. The guy that has ever written, You know, I've watched every episode of American gods, you know, And I know I'm listening to the Sandman on on Audible because I'm just like, Yes, this is brilliant. A big part of that relationship has been those regular communications through a meal unless from the game and saying, Hey, this is what I'm doing. This is what I'm working on on. There is no other advertising. You know, those emails did not feel like advertising to me. You know, it just so happens to be it feels to me Hey, it's and you know it says, Hey, Steven on it feels like an email from a friend who just happens to mention, Hey, I've got a new book, you click on you going by and you know, I'm supporting a friend. So that's why email marketing is so incredibly powerful for authors because you get the bell of those long term relationships where sailing kind of slips into the background. On the most important thing is your building those relationships. So, for example, I knew in your emails, for example, Chris, you know you talk about different aspects of your life, you know, some sort of going Hey, what's Chris up to this week? Oh, that's great. You know, you know, we talk pretty frequently on, you know, and I think it kind of surprises you sometimes. And I say, Hey, you know, I saw you up to this this week, and you're kind of like, Oh, yeah, you read the newsletter.

[00:04:53] Carissa Andrews: I forget that you're even on. It sometimes s so weird. I

[00:04:59] Stephen Gordon: think this is This is the most powerful thing about newsletter or email. Marketing is if you build the relationships, everything else just comes along naturally, and it's it's all about, you know, finding it's a combination of two things. It's about finding the content that you're quite happy to sit down and write weekly, which you do. You are, you know, we'll talk about frequency at some point. I

[00:05:23] Carissa Andrews: was just gonna ask that question. Actually, it was on my in my brain. I'm like, Okay, how First of all, I want to know the real quick. How frequently does Neil game and actually put his out?

[00:05:32] Stephen Gordon: He used to be weekly not so much anymore, just like what's happening you're just not, You know, we're not good enough for you anymore. But it's kind of, you know, you sort of go

[00:05:43] Carissa Andrews: like like people. I'm

[00:05:46] Stephen Gordon: on the NAFTA Netflix money. Now, I don't need you guys ever e I don't need a couple 100 seals on Amazon. You know, a six figure deals with Netflix. You must come to it. Hiring a system. Make them right. Um, but he he sort of slipped back into a monthly night. Um, you know, But I'm hoping that don't returns because the really successful ones. I mean, I'm I actually checked before this, I'm subscribed the 3.5 1000 newsletters because it's my job. Yeah, it's It's a good maybe 3.5 1000. A bit excessive, but you know, that's it's good for me because I get to see there are trans and email marketing. So just as you see fashion and trends, everything else there is an email marketing as well. It let's me see what's coming through. But I have on I recommend this to everyone. Get a dedicated Gmail, the kind you know, you can call it, you know, Stephen on newsletter test at Gmail doesn't matter on. You're gonna use this account to sign up for every newsletter you see. I mean, every newsletter, especially authors newsletters, actively, quite. And hunt for them. You know, whenever you're you know, if you find books on on Amazon, especially in your genre, go and find their sides, sign up for their emails, sign up for those newsletters, they're all gonna come through. And you're looking for things like, Do they go into the in box? Because if they do, we'll talk about that later on. But getting an email, getting your newsletter email into someone's inbox, that's a huge win. That's a massive win, especially with Google, because the reason I recommend getting a Google account to do this. Google has the best spam filters in the world, and they also have that little added challenge off Google. Don't let anyone just anyone in the damn box if they have a with that you're doing some sort of promotion. They'll put you in the promotions folder, and that's just stepping you away from reaching that inbox. So this is why it's hugely important for authors to use their their newsletters to build the relationships as oppose the sailing because after a while, Google says yes. Stephen wants to hear from Karissa. So you know he keeps, you know, marking out is its claim that it's fine and then you'll just start dropping into the in box. You know, more and more frequently. I'm not going into the spam folder or with Google, more than likely the Functions folder. So yeah, it's It's a huge, huge, huge topic. But it's It's massively important because, you know, getting getting your email marketing right and you'll see the authors as you sign up for all the different mailing lists, even going outside your genre because, you know, as a genre romance authors are killing it.

[00:08:29] Carissa Andrews: How so?

[00:08:31] Stephen Gordon: Romance authors and I must find this site. I think someone by the looks of it, maybe about 18 months two years ago has influenced romance authors to segment their content. And what I mean by that is it. They said, Hey, put up a big calendar on in week one, you're gonna send a book review. Hey, I read this book this month, and it's wonderful, you know, in Week two, you're going to say, Hey, here's a classic film. Here's a classic love story film that I enjoy. You know, in week three, you're gonna talk about your process on in week four. You're going Thio, you're gonna you're gonna talk about another aspect and it works. It works really well because the emails tend to be shorter. They tend to be tightly focused, but more importantly, they tend to be conversational. It's all that concept off. You're building that relationship constantly, and they're doing it in an authentic way. People signed up to for a reason, you know, as a supernatural author, show I e. That would be kind of a supernatural author. Somebody's probably already done it, but there's a story idea, but it's an author off off, supernatural fiction off urban urban fantasy fiction. You know, if that is your genre, if you're then delivering that content weekend week out, off. You know this is this is a big world. There's lots of other content that's happening in that space, not just other authors in that space, which is killed to do as well. But if you're talking to people a bite Nushawn affection, then you're just gonna keep buying into every week. I guess do wrong impression trying to give Is that the really important thing for email marketing for authors? That's different. Everyone else you don't get this for e commerce is you get to build a really genuine long term relationship between use the author on the audience because you are both into the same thing. I place him really well to start to identify who your audience is.

[00:10:31] Carissa Andrews: Well, so for any of the listeners who are like Okay, well, I've started an email list. I'm not quite sure if I'm liking it. Or maybe they haven't started one. I know. I have, ah, number of authors who are in my circle who are new, and they really haven't put the effort into building a list yet. Do you have any service providers that you recommend the most?

[00:10:52] Stephen Gordon: I'm always hesitant about this on anyone who's listening to this podcast. Please, please, please. I'm guessing Chris here to see him. I don't want lots of emails, but this is why you're wrong about the service provider. Things comes from this. Comes from a place off managing multiple email kind suffered for different people. I'm gonna put a bit of a disclaimer in the hair is, well, anything that you've heard before the 23rd of October 2020 I have possibly being captured saying Meal Chimp is the best thing in the world. I've moved on from male chimp and still have a lot of other people mail. Chimp used to be brilliant for authors Right now, as off today, I've got a couple of recommendations on the first recommendation. Miller Lite Miller Lite has become like the natural successor for meal chimp.

[00:11:38] Carissa Andrews: They really geared themselves in the very beginning. Toe authors to where they would partner with it was insta freebie at first. Then they changed into prolific works where they'd offer special deals specifically, if you were an insta freebie customer or prolific works customer, you'll get a discount on Miller Lite or they actually have, like, book bub logo so that you can leave your book publics. I don't As of right now, I don't think there are any other email service providers that offer, like a book bub Social Media link at the bottom of your email the way that they do with Facebook and Instagram and all that stuff. So they kind of almost aggressively it felt like went towards authors or four authors.

[00:12:12] Stephen Gordon: Yeah, Miller Lite did seem thio. Keep that. Hey, look, we really want Thio be the email marketing tool of choice for creatives for freelancers that and they do it very well. But it's always good to have competition on a nice piece of competition for Miller, late at the moment is Ah, they're not. They're not relatively new. It's a product called New Sound on Moose Sound km. Moussa has been around for about over 10 years. A couple of years ago, they then decided we're missing out on a big opportunity here. On they moved into the The business to Consumer Market is they would call it and they started offering our product. That's great for authors, great for freelancers. It's got a different interferes, but they're both relatively comparable products. But Moose Sand has two advantages over Miller Lite At the moment that air significant for authors, the first is price because with both of the products, you get your 1st 1000 subscribers for free, which is brilliant because you know what, gonna try them both out, play around with them, see which one you like best and obviously the more subscribers you get, you know, the more you're paying with Miller Lite, but you're paying reasonable amounts. Last with moose and support is really good on both. But the second really compelling argument I have from us. And that's why I kind of off the two. I think Miller leitess slightly easier to use but moose and has this feature that I love on they incest right from the start. Hey, if you want to send email with us, you have to do it through an authenticated the man name and they will actually send your email light from their servers, but under your authenticated the man right from the start. But honestly, if someone was to say, Hey, I've used one service of the other, I'd be like, Hey, jin, what? They're both Korea, and they will both do you need them to do? There are much more expensive services out there, like convert kit like active Champion. But honestly, for authors just focused on selling books they are really expensive on. They can be overkilled. If you're an author with other aspects of your business associate, for example, you're providing courses or you're selling merch or stuff like that. Those other tools I campaigned convert Kit, send them blue things like that. Those can all have, you know, unique features that are useful to you. But if you're just on author, especially in the early early days of your career, Miller Lite or Moose and Ni, if you are an author who has

had this stage we're going did I am spending like 203 \$100 a month on my email marketing service. I'm releasing two books a year. Is there any way I could do this cheaper? That absolutely is. Which takes you to a different kind of service. Eso something, which is how a bit of a nexpo ocean over the past few years, Amazon offers a simple email service on what the way this works is, Amazon says, Hey, you can send Ah 1000 emails for 10 cents, which is great if you happen to be a developer. But if you're not, it kind of sucks and you've lost eight. So what's happened? There's a number of services have come into play on their services, like flu desk services like email octopus on sandy on these air tools, which you can use, which either connect negatively the Amazon SCS themselves or let you connect to your own Amazon. S. E. S account on what this basically means is, if you have 100,000 subscribers on your emailing them a few times a month, Miller lights gonna charge you 360 bucks. If you have that simona subscribers on something like Flu Desk, you can have as many subscribers as you want for \$19 with email octopus. It's about \$50 with Sandy at work site about 40 bucks. So it's significantly smaller, but you lose some of the features. So, for example, flu desk is in beta on. Do you know there are certain things that flew desk doesn't do so they're reporting is not a strong is Miller Lite. Their landing pages are branded. You can't have custom two men names with them, you know. And these are things which is a service that said, Hey, you know, we're going to improve, but they're probably gonna put their prices up is well, so if you're an author who has a large mailing list on the majority of it is I'm relationship building. I only release a couple of books a year looking for one of the Amazon SCS connect the services is going to give you that similar inequality for a much lower price. You just may not get some of the little bells and whistles you get with Miller Lite less hand holding us. Well,

[00:17:01] Carissa Andrews: gotcha. So for authors, in your opinion, what's the best way to be able to get people originally over to your email list? Is it using the like the reader magnets like you would do with story origin or book funnel? Or is there a better way to be able to do that?

[00:17:14] Stephen Gordon: I definitely recommend setting up a league magnet. Confer anybody who's lesson. Who doesn't know what lead magnet is. A lead magnet is something that you offer for free on your website. Typically, in order to get someone's email address in return on for authors. What we tend the offer is, Ah, short story on extract of the novel. Or if you've got a Siri's, you may want to give the first book away for free and say, Hey, all you gotta do is send up my mailing list. I'm going to give you this thing. I absolutely encourage someone who's just starting out, especially on the first book in a Siri's Don't spend any up on me, you know. Go and explore. Get your website set up. Establish connections with other authors in your genre. You know, through tools like story origin through through tools like Book Funnel, where they offer these different giveaways those air

grit for essentially testing your platform. So, you know, come people sign up, do they get the book? You know, um, I getting the right target audience, you know, and you're starting to feed this information back in your own marketing system. But once you're platforms established, once you're a couple of books into the Siri's, you know, once your website set up. Once you've tested that workflow, the single best way of consistently growing your mailing list with the people you want, I'll talk about that in a second is odd Facebook ads, Pinterest adds. Wherever you're good reasons, wherever your target audience hangs out, that's where you should be placing ads to say, Hey, person who likes this genre affection? Here's a new book which you should totally try out, which you should totally read, And it's not just enough to get them to sign up for it. You need to use your email marketing system to get them to read the darn thing as well. Like or not, you're gonna have to spend money because I knew you're a member off the 20 bucks to 50 k group. I love reading success stories on there. If anybody who's listening to this isn't a member of that group as well as caresses groups, you are bunkers because one of the nice things I love with that group is people are very generous and saying, Hey, I was here They are like the longest Facebook pushing you've ever read right?

[00:19:34] Carissa Andrews: They're like a full on book. It's almost like we're authors or something. It's

[00:19:38] Stephen Gordon: like, you know, the writing, these big, long things. Like Andi. I was an orphan and I was living on an island and I was shipwrecked and all this horrible stuff happened to me. And then I started writing and I got it horribly wrong. It's like the X factor of people come and go. Oh, it's just like all this bad stuff. My life has have done some my dream to be a star, but these ones are much more grounded in best in reality. Where these folks Santa. Hey, look, you know, I was working. The typical thing tends to be I was working a job I had. I was working two jobs. I was a stay at home Mom. I was unfulfilled, you know? And then I started writing and I was doing 100 words a day. And then I found my genre and I did this, you know? And then you're about 500 words, and it's like And then I started making money from my books on. They start talking about their whole authors journey in every single one of those I have read. They talk about odds on they talk about. Odds are they're feeding seals or fitting their email marketing. It is impossible to get round it in the early days. Maybe 10 years ago, you could still have breakout. Viral success is, you know, on platforms like Facebook like instagram. But now those channels are so akin to if you want to get noticed, you have to pay. Yeah, on odds have toe happen. So if you really want to grow that email marketing list with the right people, You've got to buy ads when I say the right people. I mean, people who really want to read your book who are into that sort of fiction. I mean, I can sit and read superhero books all day, even the terrible ones. You know, I may not enjoy it, but I'll finish it. I guarantee you I will finish. I

will sit there. And I would you know, I've been suckered in the reading teen romances because of pod superheroes on it. Get there. And then I go, I'm a 48 year old man. And I knew what and still love means. I never used to know what that was until people started sneaking into superhero affection. The danger with things like newsletter swaps with platforms like story origin is that you could get the wrong people download in your book, and that can start skewing your results. You're going Hey, this is great. I went on this story Origin on. I got 5000 sign up for my newsletter. I'm not going to take those 5000. I'm going to promote my book and then you you look at it on. You know you're sending a 5000 emails. But you're going, dude. Only like 200 people live in this because you know there's a pretty good chance of the 4800 who signed out. We're just free books, free books, free books and you're just being swarmed by freebie hunters. I

[00:22:04] Carissa Andrews: think that's a little bit less with the newsletter swaps and more with the group giveaways, though for sure, because sometimes you can get the really good authors who swap with you and who have a really great audience and who are who promote you in a way that highlights you really well. But the group of the ways it's just a bunch of, like books in there that are, you know, at a discount of some sort

[00:22:22] Stephen Gordon: to examples that I've read, I kind of knew, but have to be very careful now will be able to join them all. So these are actually two examples appeared on 20 bucks to 50 K on. I did work for both of these people. For both of these authors on one of them went through the group giveaway. I was like, Oh my goodness, I've had 10,000 sign ups. You know from one promotion. This person called 10,000 sign ups on they fed me. Hey, here is the Here are the email addresses. I want you to run ads on this. I was like, OK on with fiscal guards, which is a whole lot of subject with fist regards. Your very quickly able to tell this data is good or this data is not so good on this data was kind of, you know, drawing the odds on the responses. Where? Yeah, whereas when another author who went through the process off going through story origin, identifying who was in the genre, I'm reaching out to them saying, Hey, you know, would you be interested in not just putting this in your email and go on? Hey, this is a book that you might like, but I'd like you to read the book on if you like it, even if you know, if you read the first couple of chapters, would you put on your newsletter? Andi? They landed someone with 65,000 subscriber newsletter for their style of book and said, Hey, would you read this blah blah with absolutely no reciprocation whatsoever? This 65,000 subscribers. Holder came back and said, Good. I just You know, I emailed everybody about your book. Hope it gives you a bump on it. Absolutely dead. They came away with 12.5 1000 sign ups because the author who had referred them again very clearly, you know, always says, Hey, if you like this stuff, tell other people, tell other people, tell other people they came away with 12.5 1000 sign ups on I'm a pretty nice book launch as well, which was, you

know, that was massively unexpected to them.

[00:24:20] Carissa Andrews: That's fantastic.

[00:24:22] Stephen Gordon: It's better to have a naughty insert, 1000 people who are into what you do than an audience of 10,000 who just came along because, you know, there is a free book. I'm just getting the free book. Yeah, tools like story origin tools like Book Funnel. The group give away some things that can be useful. But don't get sucked in by the prospect of big sign up numbers, because they will just skew your demographics to the point where you're going. I'm trying to sell a romance book to, you know, a 60 year old ex military veteran uh, reach guns and ammo. This is what especially for new your authors. You're trying to identify what those demographics are. It's a nice It's a nice sort of segue into segmentation, because segmentation is where you can slice and dice your mailing list. You can't see this at home, but I'm waving my hands about slicing things up on for for authors, this is you'll. You'll get authors who will go out, and they will get like the super expensive email marketing thing because it does all this wonderful automation and tagging and all these other sorts of things. Andi, it will absolutely kill you at the start, because the reality is what you're looking for is something which segments your audience into four groups on those four groups are everyone who signs up is a subscriber. Do you then want to use your segmentation to start identifying who are my readers? So you know someone who has signed up and has downloaded a book? It's fair enough. They assume that there are reader because they have your product on hand and then someone who is a reader, how do you then progressive into the third segment, which is a reviewer, and there are ways of getting people to self identify because obviously Amazon sucks given you any theater, Uh, you know, and you don't wanna be that creepy guy who is scrolling through Amazon reviews and going, I think that's this guy. I think I think that's this guy. So I'll market is that there are ways of getting people to Hopley said. Self identify. And then the fourth group, depending on your preferred terminology, you know, So someone who has been a subscriber like your copy so much that they downloaded your book like the book so much that they left a review positive review, then moves into that fourth segment again. The terminology is different, but you may want to promote that person from being a review into being part of your Advanced Reader group or your meter readers do. You may want to promote them into that, because these air your super fans on segmentation inside emails is important on the reason why I say that is that as you said that your email marketing messages you can choose what the Santa who or whom I should say, you know, if you are in a new work in progress, and it's getting near the end. You may want to just contact your advance trading group to say, Hey, here's the work in progress. You know, you can get an early look. No, I want that early feedback. Here's cover. You know, this is a group you can talk about covers. You know, I was thinking on releasing it, and this did because these air your super funds, who

will then go on until other people, you know, and you can actively go to them and say, I would really love it if you went on all of your Social Media's on started linking to the book. That would be marvelous, because there's a strong likelihood that they're going to do it on even taking it right back. If someone is in your mailing list and who isn't marked as a reviewer, then you can start sending them on email on automated email a couple of times a year, saying, Hey, I would love if you reviewed one of my books. You know, I'm putting that self selection thing where, until they click the link that says, I've already reviewed this, um, that they keep getting that automated email, those general reminders on Do you know if you're sending those out twice a year without any thought that you don't have to do it, it's it's automation it's automatically generated for you. Your reviews are just gonna grow in the background without you having to do anything other than write those originally meals. And again, the email marketing service where if you put the link in there, which says, Hey, you know, someone clicked on this and they went through Amazon. Believe me, a review. You can then have your email marketing service wit for 10 days and then go back and say, Hey, just want to check that you have any problems leaving the review. Was that nuke a process? Is there any feedback I can give Amazon like we can? But, you know, you've got to give the illusion on if someone goes, Hey, no, It was a really smooth process buying. They've just become a review, and it's an example of self selection, and you're progressing people through and you know, the joys of email marketing services. You can have all of this from when someone signs up and get your freebie to sending auto generated emails that says, Hey, you know, Did you Did you like the book? What did you like most? What did you like least and then, based on their behavior, you could take them through that process where you're gently nudging them, not harassing to go from a subscriber to a reader to review two. Okay, who makes the most noise? You know who is just, you know, absolutely brilliant and coming back and saying, I love your books so much And I was telling all my friends, Hey, I am promoting you to one of my advanced readers. You know, it would be like, you know, if if someone was a big fan of the Beatles on, you know, on, you know, on George said, Hey, do you wanna come backstage and listen to the rehearsals? Yes, yes, I love you, George. You know, it's it's that kind of thing massively dating myself. I wasn't around for the Beatles. It was

[00:29:35] Carissa Andrews: just the first group I could think

[00:29:36] Stephen Gordon: off the nuts. That's where the relationship building comes in. Because email marketing for authors isn't just I have a new book by my book. It's about that relationship building on unrecognized people for you know, when someone clicks on the link to say Yes, I've left your review well, then it goes away and then it comes back on its Hey, here's a special link on It's a video of, you know, for example, of the G Kresser. You know, it's a video of you going, Hey, I want to say thanks very much for review in my book. That

means an awful lot to me. Thank you so much for doing that. And then someone's getting about going, Hey, that was a nice little thank you. I'm really impressed. It's actually possible is, well, to have technology where you're holding up a blank little piece of card on it says Hi, John. Thanks for the review you because it takes the name from the email marketing lesson printed on the card as you hold up in the video that is all feasible these days. It's all about personalization relationship building, so I know that's a sort of shooting off a tangent, but it's I can't building those relationships segment and people dying. And yet, honestly, treating someone who you know has bought your books has left your reviews, treating them a little bit different and a bit more specially than someone who did. You haven't even know my freaking emails in six months. So you know you're not getting my love. This person is getting my love

[00:30:58] Carissa Andrews: right. Well, it's that kind of surprising moment to because if there's a lot, a lot of people that are doing whatever it is you plan on doing, say your example, for instance, it makes them stop and go. Holy cow! That was really a neat thing that just happened there. What, what, so I could do that? So speaking of all those segments and all those people, let's say we get a lot of people into the list. Our goal is obviously to interact with them like you said, and have that relationship. But what happens when the email service providers do want to start flagging us? Bam. Are there any newsletter best practices to stay out of those spam or promotion folders so that we actually get in front of our readers?

[00:31:36] Stephen Gordon: Or if this is a podcast that was about 15 hours long and the great what? Because I could just talk about

[00:31:43] Carissa Andrews: give us your top three top three s.

[00:31:46] Stephen Gordon: The key thing to remember about spam filters is a very brief background on promises is brief. So spam feller score every single and bind email. So every email that you sand goes out two different email servers around the world on all of these email servers have their own spam filtering system. So Google, as I say, has gotten incredibly brilliant, one driven, unsurprisingly, by artificial intelligence. But no matter high advanced, they get all spam filters at the core exactly to see him, and that they score every inbound email on they score them from 0 to 10 0 being, you know, Whoa, that's very good, You know, It's just like, hey that I have new concerns with this email whatsoever and it sends it straight through to when it reaches 10 is like, Yeah, you know what you're spamming mix, palmerston, that I'm not letting you anywhere near my client's email. The kind what it tends to be is une email that scores five or higher is more likely to get in this bomb. So different email servers have different degrees off aggression when it comes thio. I only accept emails with three or below. Everything else was in the spam, but the average tends to be about five on. Every spam filter has his

own customized rules that score e meals. But but here's a relatively typical example. If someone signs up so someone finds your website and they go, Oh, that's the book for me. I want that. I want that lead magnet and they give your email address your first email. Go screaming towards their email server, but it gets stopped by their spam filter. I said, Okay, Before you go any further, I want to check a couple of things. Okay, so this is the first time this email account has received an email from you, so I'm gonna add a point from that. So you weren't zero, but I'm giving you an automatic one point pound They then checks for I don't wanna get massively technical, but there's a couple of there's a couple of DNS records. There's three DNS records. Specifically, they're called SPF de came on D mark on It's way too complicated. One to write nine. But a spam filter will say, Hey, has your email got those three records which says this email is from not the man. And if you don't have one of them. So, for example, if you don't have your d Kim, it will say, Hey, that's another two point. Apparently your three points body, the next thing I'll do is Whoa, you've got five images in your email that's plus 0.2 points for each because they're going. Hey, you know what? Friends don't really send other friends. A lot of images. It tends it. So spam filters essentially looking for conversation, rather be sensing with a lot of images. That's going, You're not his friend. You're just trying to sell them something, so it will give a couple of extra points. I'll get 0.2 points. But it knows every now and again you know, I want to send Kresa. You know, look at this cat falling off this roof, but it's okay, you know, funny get. But, you know, spam filters knew that. So they go. Yeah, but sometimes they just do so penalizes you, but not as much. But then not see him. Email has 12 lengths in it, because, yeah, you may be like the one or two things, but like 12 So it goes. Yeah, Good. I'm gonna I'm gonna penalize you another half a point for each one of those. And then it looks at and says, Yes, There's only like 10 words in this email. That's a really lewd text, the Lincoln imagery issue. So that's another point. It's just penalizing and penalizing and penalizing. But then it goes, Yeah, but you know what? It's really well laid out. The HTML is clean in this, so I'm gonna take two points off, but your total score still nine points. So you're going into spam. You're just not going any further. Whereas if for your first email is an author, you send that someone on. All it says is, Hey, Krista, I just want to thank you for signing up for you know, my first book. I really hope you enjoy reading it. Thanks, Stephen. The small fella is gonna go, Hey, it's the first time, so I'm gonna penalize you with a point. But it's clean text. There's no links. It's all pretty straightforward. It looks like a conversation. I'm gonna let you in. They're going to get the next email five minutes later. Two minutes later, with the link to download the book. It's gonna go. You've got a link. But I've seen you before, so I'm gonna give you I'm gonna give you the benefit that I'm going to start letting you in so you're starting to tree and spam filters. It's all about trying to convince this spam filters. Hey, this is a conversation. It's not a sales pitch. So that the kind of the main points on the do that is you know,

it's used one of the good email marketing service, you know? So the ones I've mentioned Miller like Moose Sand, you know, send a email octopus. You know, even meal champ. I mean, meal Champ is still it's got expensive, but it's still a really good service, and they send emails with clean HTML code. The next is the validate. If you're listening at home, I'm not gonna go through how to do this. But if you're just going to Google and type and how do you validate D Kim SPF on the mark records? There are loads of videos online. There's YouTube videos. There's all sorts that will tell you how to do it if

[00:36:52] Carissa Andrews: you think even inside the platform. Yeah, I was going to say in the email service provider, I know Mailer Light has information on how to do your D Kim and every everything where it walks you straight through the whole process.

[00:37:04] Stephen Gordon: Just a quick note on that. A lot of service providers will have a guidance on how to do it. Quite a few will say, Hey, you don't really need to do this. You're doing Ignore them. Just say, you know what? I know I probably don't need to do this, but I'd like to Anyway, it is really worth doing because it will help get you past spam filters more often. I also definitely recommend that when someone signs up to your mailing list that you redirect them to a dedicated thank you page on that. The dedicated thank you Page says, Hey, thanks for signing up and then ask them, Can you add me to your contact list? You're going to get an email from, you know Stephen Carisa. Whatever the email addresses, can you add this to your contact list? Use your thank you page to make it more likely to get past the spam folder or ask people in the thank you page add this email address to your contact list. It's right there. They're more likely to do it and it increases your open Ritz. And it's absolutely fantastic. Don't try to sell anybody. And please, please, please, please, please don't try to sell anybody in a thank you page after they've just signed up your mailing list. It is a massive waste of Tang. You may sell one book, you may sell one book or you can ask them to add you to their contacts list where you can email them forever and sell them. Lots of books will never ask someone to do one thing. And I think your page and make that one thing to be to add you to their contact list. The next thing I definitely recommend is sending what I call a welcome work flu. I mentioned earlier where you're welcome. Workflow is You know, you start with a simple email just thanking them. Thanks for signing up to my email. You know, keep an eye. The next email is gonna be your link to your free book. It's a nice, simple text email. There's no promotional stuff in it on. It's just to help you get past the spam filter to start educating that users and books I want to hear from Chris. I wanna hear from Steve. Um, the next email is here is the link to download your book wherever that's going to be on. Then you kind of scale. You know, I'm typically tend to say, you know, you're welcome. Your nurture sequences tends to be between 3 to 7 emails, depending on what way you're gonna build it up. And it's helping people get the new You on all those emails asked a question. I love

this. I got this tip a couple of years ago. Well, five years ago, it's like the best thing so simple. But in a couple of those emails, put a little PS ps. Hey, I'd love them. What part of the world you're from? Have replied. Let me know. Hey, you know ps. Hey, what book are you reading right now? Encouraging those replies starts building up not just the relationship between you on the subscriber, but it also sends this massive singled with spam filter off. Oh, this is a two way conversation. These people really are friends. Okay, I'm gonna let you know? Hey, you come on in. Come on in on. It improves your sport, improves your cinder repetition. The kind of annoying thing is is that I could be emailing Khoury so we could be emailing barks and forwards for, like, five years. But then one day when I decided to send the link to you Hey, I've just opened up a new e commerce store and I think you love this stuff. Spam filter is gonna go. Hey, no, that's still spar on. It's gonna drop me into the spam filter. Do you keep an eye open on your open rates because they will change for every email campaign that you send them, they'll be relatively consistent. But if one day you spot that you're open rate just plummets to, like 3%. What did you put that email? Because they spam filters really didn't like it. Don't do that again on. Then I mentioned up earlier on. It amazes me the amount of people that don't do that create a specific Gmail test, the kind So the Gmail account that I use Thio subscribed all the newsletters. I subscribe to all of my clients, newsletters on mine newsletters as well, because I always send the task email. So when I built the campaign and the first thing I do is I had tasked, I send the right and I look to see where it goes that lands in the spam folder. I've got to go and do something about that.

[00:41:08] Carissa Andrews: That makes sense.

[00:41:09] Stephen Gordon: So that's that's kind of the key things that will get you passed the spam folder. But if you're hitting under 20% too much of your email is going in this palm. So

[00:41:18] Carissa Andrews: it's more like a one on one kind of ratio. Like each email that you send out, it determines whether or not you're gonna go into spam. It's not gonna be like, Oh, you want to span this one time? So for the next, I don't know, six weeks you're locked in spam hell, until you you find a way to pull out of it.

[00:41:35] Stephen Gordon: A different conversation you and I have had in the past is one of things about giveaways that they do, and things like story, origin and book funnel is that you know you could be signed up. They'll send Hey, here's my weekly newsletter. Hey, this week I went snowboarding, blah, blah, blah. Hey, here are 50 free books for you. There are 50 images and 50 links on that. Email is going into spam. I guarantee that email is going into spam because, you know, you know, I've seen hundreds of them coming in on a weekly basis. Sometimes I'm going, Hey, these guys are all signed

[00:42:07] Carissa Andrews: up for the same giveaway

[00:42:08] Stephen Gordon: on every single one of them. Without without feel. Hasn't even made it into the promotions folder has made it into spam. That is just, you know, Gmail just did. You're going in the Spaniards. Who? Spammy. It's unbelievable. And it's about going right. Okay, You know, if if you're worried that stuff is going into spam, what I recommend doing is Skilling back. I'm going. Hey, don't want the newsletter I'm going to send this week. It's gonna be largely text. It's gonna have new links and it other than the unsubscribe link because the unsubscribe link it's still passes a link on sending that I on dancing with the open rates like, you know, with a non seals. The headline. So you know, a good one for authors is actually a brilliant one for authors is, Here's my new writing process. It's a simple text email. There's no images in it. And then compare that the open rates of your previous emails. I'll be massively surprised if it doesn't go up. I mean, if someone listen to this and I'm going, Are you kidding me? I've got book lunch. Honestly, dial it back. You know, you can still send at your book. Launch email. I know that other sort of great stuff, you know? But sand those relationship emails dial it back to something simple. That's what I recommend for your newsletters. You know, I hit em each headers. I mean, I'm just go on, you know, and again, spam filters go. Yeah, you aren't a real person. This isn't a real conversation because he goes, Hey, I'm going to send the letter to my mom or my mom. If I was in the States, I'm going to send a letter to my mom on. I'm gonna I'm gonna start this with an image header off my brand. Hey, look, it's Stephen Garden author Brand at the top. Dear Mother hire you to you know, it just you know, it it doesn't work. I mean, I always said everyone looks if you're branding, see if all of that for your website. Use your emails to have a conversation.

[00:43:54] Carissa Andrews: Okay, so that brings up a question for me. Because I actually have my my newsletter head Earth that have created just where it's just a little image at the top. So you're saying that that shouldn't even exist up there, That you should just start with what they're Hey, Stephen, how's it going? And then hope that they know who you are.

[00:44:11] Stephen Gordon: Yeah, well, ah, no, actually, that's a really great point. So this kind of takes us back a little bit that when you're setting everything up inside your email marketing service provider, you get set some options and one of the couples options. The first one is what email address do you want to send this from? So I like standing up from Steve and email marketing superstars. But you then get to set your name. People don't do this on its bunkers. So it's the from the, um you know. So I put in there Stephen email superstars. So when the email comes up in someone's in books they go. It's Steven from email superstars. Because if I just put Stephen Gordon, I know I'm not that important to people's lives. That they're

going like this is Stephen Gordon E Geiman. Fair enough, But you know Stephen Gordon is gonna go. I don't know who Stephen Gordon is from authors. Perspective. If it's someone who's recently signed up on that, maybe about three or four books in their in their Kindle with a backlog right hundreds more like. But

[00:45:12] Carissa Andrews: someone's got a

[00:45:12] Stephen Gordon: backlog of free books that they're going to read. They're gonna go. I don't remember even signed up for this. But whereas you know, if it says take you for example, you know if the from them is, you know Chris and it says, you know, urban fantasy author or whatever you want straight away, it's putting another heads. Oh yeah, that's a book person. That's the author

[00:45:31] Carissa Andrews: mind comes out Supernatural suspense author. Where it's Chris Andrews, supernatural suspense author. That is something that I at least did. Dio did do that one right? Yeah, yes. Um, almost almost what they screw up. Now

[00:45:48] Stephen Gordon: look again. Look, this is where you know, being massively anally retentive helps, which you know most other people aren't going to do this. But the preview on the email has a character kind. So with on a mobile, if someone's checking their email on a mobile device, the from them is 20 characters. That's all you get. So it's you know they'll maybe see Steven something. The best policy when you're putting your from them is don't bury the lead. Put the important stuff at the front, you know? So you know, do I have to have my name at the front? I certainly I I never put Stephen Gordon because it's just like you, but I will tend to put my first name and then something short and sharp, instantly recognizable. So you know, Stephen, and then I use the pipe symbol. Email superstars on it tends to pop up even on the shortest ones. It says. Email it, says Stephen email. Super, I was like, Oh yeah, that's enough for recognition. That's the easy identifier, because people are going. I have to have this branded head or, in my email, ongoing Good. Honestly, someone's already decided if they're gonna open your email way before that point where they decide is the from them. Hey, it's the from them. I want to read this. This is one that's interesting to me. People sign up for an author newsletter because of the content because of the written word. Give it to them. Just give that to them. Don't worry about the images. If you've got a snazzy new book covered, Yeah, put that on their mega single image. But I tend to recommend away from, you know, snazzy headers, images everywhere. I mean, use them. But, you know, images and links for emails is like seasoning for food. You know, a little goes an awful long way. You know, if your going, I'm sending this email, you know, I've written my new book. I'm getting ready. Lunch. Here are the two possible book designs. Which one should I use? That seasoning the content, you know? So that's gonna get you passed. The spam filters.

[00:47:52] Carissa Andrews: That's fantastic. Okay, so do you have any other creative ideas for authors to be able to use their email list? Anything that, like just off the top of your head, that would give them something to think about before we sign off here?

[00:48:05] Stephen Gordon: The very last single Say I mentioned romance Authors have been doing this for a while and that is to have your plan because there's nothing worse. You get massively enthusiastic. You start your email list and you do it for a couple of weeks on Ben, You're just tired. You don't know what to put next on. You just tip her off and then the next thing you know, people haven't heard from you in months on, then you're going back to and say, Hey, I've got a new book and they're like, I don't even know who you are did. Why am I gonna buy a book? You can either identify a pattern or you can have a template. One version that I used for a while and I kind of liked it. Was working progress. This is what I've read. This is what I've listened to. This is what I've watched. This is what I recommend. It was the same five points in the email every week. I didn't use headers. It was just a long form email on people really liked it. It worked really well. Offers understand that concept off all structure, you know? So just as you've got You know your hero's journey. Just as you've got your your C of the cat formulas, your three acts structures. It's the same for your email marketing. You can decide this is what I want to talk about each week. Um, this is the light. Then just go for it. So that would be my number one recommendation. Because if you're not putting my content, you've got nothing to measure. If you're not sending your newsletters, you've got nothing to measure. You won't know if your service provider is good or bad. You won't know if you're open. Rates are higher low. You won't know if you're going into spam or not. If you're not sending out an email every week on weekly is you know, I thought I around a couple of pools of test that there's numerous times a Nweke Lee is the best. It is the best frequency to sound out there newsletter. It just keeps you in someone's head constantly.

[00:49:53] Carissa Andrews: Now, you obviously teach people how to do email marketing properly. So where do they find you?

[00:50:00] Stephen Gordon: Obviously, Best place is just go to email marketing superstars dot com. There is a contact form on there just its got links. Thio. My Social Media's It's got my email. It's got everything on there. If you have questions, I'm quite happy to talk about this stuff pointing in the right direction, you know? Or if you go, I don't wanna do this. I wanna hire you. You can go on there. We're gonna start that conversation. Or but, you know, it's not a pay to play, you know, especially if you're an author. If you're an author, Listen, listen. You're going I don't really know where to start. Just get in touch. We consort some tonight, bond. Chances are you're gonna go away normal. You need to know, and it's not gonna cost

you panic.

[00:50:40] Carissa Andrews: Well, there you have it. Stephen Gordon's tips on how to be able to best utilize author email marketing so that we can not only get our emails into the inbox is and out of spam hell, but also to be able to engage our readers in a way that entices them to not only buy our books, but to stick around and understand who we are and really build a relationship with them so that hopefully we can even cultivate them from being not only a subscriber to a reader, to a reviewer and ultimately, to someone who wants to be an avid super fan. Thank you so much again, Stephen Gordon, for being here today and for being a part of the podcast. Alright, so be sure to head over to authorrevolution.org/53, head over to the show notes and get some of the links and information that Steven Garden was talking about. And if you have any questions, be sure to reach out by going over to the author Revolution Online community, Facebook Group, where we could talk a little bit more about email marketing and how we can utilize it best for our author careers. All right, guys, that's it for today. I hope you go forth and start your author Revolution