

EPISODE 57

Is There Such a Thing as Sustainable Rapid Release?

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Welcome back to the Author Revolution Podcast! I'm your host, international bestselling indie author, Carissa Andrews – and CEO of Author Revolution, the indie author's source for all things rapid releasing.

First, a word about our sponsor. Making plans to kick off your author revolution in 2021 can feel a little daunting. I mean, let's face it, 2020 didn't exactly turn out the way we expected it to. Right? However, we all know the adage, if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. So, if being organized really isn't your jam (or let's face it, you've just got too much going on with all the kids doing distance learning from home), then I've got you covered with the Author Revolution 2021 Quickstart Publishing Kit. In it, you'll get clear on your book launches, daily writing goals, and so much more with the PDF downloadables and cheat sheets I've built exclusively to get you moving fast. I want 2021 to be as successful as possible for you. That's why I'm offering the kit for just \$27. Head over to authorrevolution.org/quickstart to get signed up and started today.

It's been ten years since I started writing with the goal of being published one day. In this past decade, I'll be the first to say I've made a ton of mistakes. From writing a first book in a series by the seat of my pants, to publishing it without a game plan, and having no clue when books 2 & 3 would launch... Then when they did, having lack of marketing plans or, heck, even funds. You name it, I've probably stumbled on it in my indie publishing journey.



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However, one of the biggest things this menagerie of mistakes has taught me is something that might surprise you. You have to protect your peace. It might sound strange to say it, but there are those out there who are hustlers to the nth degree. They've been teaching everyone that unless you're writing a book a month, you're failing at indie authorhood. Heck, you're failing at rapid releasing! With this mindset, it's no wonder many people shy away from the concept all together.

When I first heard of rapid release, I have to admit I was partly in awe—and partly in terror—at the concept. I mean, there are some people out there who are capable of outputting an incredible amount of content very quickly. Now, look, I've always been a fast learner and a fast decision maker. I typically take on challenges others think are nuts, simply to test myself and see if I can.

Rapid release is certainly a challenge. It's no joke, that's for sure. But from one over-achiever to another, I can tell you there's still a breaking point. Even if you love what you do. Even if you adore your stories... you can burn out faster than an asteroid entering Earth's atmosphere.

Let me tell you a story.... for the past five years, I've cranked up my hustle, buying into the idea that more = better. More books, more author coaching, more clients to help, more hours put in. I've worked 7 days a week for longer than I can remember and while I have taken a couple of days off here and there, it's never been enough to truly unwind. What's ended up happening is I've ended up with stress-related health issues. Things like TMJ – and we're talking about having lock jaw to the point of having to have physical therapy for it every Wednesday for 9 months. Yeah, it was that bad. I've gotten vertigo, I've also gained weight in this time, which I suppose isn't surprising considering what I do is mostly sit down at a desk, but what is surprising is that I've adjusted my diet and workout schedule to accommodate (I've always been a workout junkie. Just ask Jillian Michaels).

But it didn't even make a dent. What I've found out is that my cortisol levels are through the roof and combined with my ripe old age of 42, I'm pretty much in a holding pattern until I get my stress levels under control. Thus, the new vacation calendar for 2021 and renewing my promise to take Saturdays off – which by the way, I have been successful at since I mentioned it last month.

Why do I tell you all of this? Because I don't want you to follow my footsteps – at least not when it comes to this particular learning curve. I don't want you to go up in flames and burn down your author career.

When I started creating the Rapid Release Roadmap program last year, I found myself struggling with the right direction to teach this concept because I didn't want to teach something that I personally found to be a stressful and anxiety invoking endeavor. It wasn't until I finished up the Windhaven Witches series that I realized the direction I wanted to take it.

So, it's with this in mind, I want to talk about the concept I call sustainable rapid releasing.

We've touched on this briefly before, but I truly believe we, as indie authors who want to make a career out of writing, need to follow a sustainable release pattern. In my eyes, and what I teach in Rapid Release Roadmap, how to embrace a sustainable rapid release schedule by writing, publishing, and promoting 4 books a year.

Rapid release doesn't have to mean crazy numbers. It doesn't have to mean a book a month. It simply means you're following a release strategy that builds your backlist faster than most.

So, to give you an idea of how I envision a 4-book sustainable rapid release strategy, let's look at it as if we're starting 100% fresh on January 1st.

For the sake of this example, I'm going to assume you're starting without any plot or series concept just yet. If this sounds like you, the way I would work it is that the first two weeks of the month could be spent in plotting/planning mode. Spend a couple of hours a day – or at least two days back-to-back – to sit down and hash out the plot lines for your books. Come up with the series arc, the book arc for all four books, and then, at the very least, do a chapter-by-chapter synopsis for the first book.

Then, the next six weeks are spent in a writing sprint. You hammer out the first draft – pretty much NaNoWriMo style by getting all the words down between the middle of January and end of February. Ideally, this means planning for a book to be between 50K and 60K words. If you write longer books than that, either consider writing slightly shorter novels, or give yourself a little more time for the writing if you need to. That means by March 1st, ideally, the first book is done and you have a month to breath before having to start writing the next one. Now, that doesn't mean your work is done, though, right? It means during the next four weeks, you're sending book 1 to the editor, planning your cover reveal, and finalizing your marketing plan, etc.

Then, you have two launch choices. Either you decide to launch this book in quarter 2 – meaning sometime between April-June, or you decide to save it and pile up your 4 books so you can rapid release them closer together at the end of the year – say, a month apart, like I just did with the Windhaven Witches series.

Now, truthfully, based on my experience this year, I haven't found an exponential growth pattern happening with the Windhaven Witches and its monthly release strategy. I know other rapid release authors who say that when they've released a book a month apart, they see huge gains by the time they hit book 4, with very minimal advertising. What I've seen is consistent sales each month based off the releases, but I do have ad spend on Facebook, BookBub, and Amazon for the series.

So, my hypothesis, at least right now, is that the book launch a month strategy is losing some of its traction within Amazon. If that's the case, then the idea of writing and publishing as fast as you can is really a moot point. One of my goals in the coming year is to talk with Amazon to learn more about the way their algorithms have changed so I can deliver some more concrete insights into this.

Regardless, my goal is to test the theory with the Diana Hawthorne releases in 2021. Amends will be releasing February 26th, Immortals on May 28th, Vestige on or around September 1st, and I'll either drop another Diana novel or possible a box set in or around October. But the idea of releasing a box set, rather than another Diana Hawthorne novel is simply to give myself some time to get ahead of the game for 2022.

Now, regardless of your release pattern, it still means you repeat the writing process starting in April, July, and October. But following the 2-week planning/plotting and 6-week writing spring, this means you'll have four months a year off from writing: March, June, September, and December. I mean, come on... who doesn't want December off from writing? I mean, other than me this year because I slacked off in November. But I digress. HA!

I don't know about you, but the breathing room in there feels doable. Even for me - who has Author Revolution to run, client work, and a zoo full of kids. So, if I can do it, even if you're working another job or have kids - I think you can probably do it, too. Don't you?

Look, at the end of the day rapid release is just a tool to help you boost your visibility, grow your backlist, and ultimately put you on the path to earning a living from your writing. I don't know about you, but that's a goal most of us are striving toward.



While the idea that the faster we write and publish, the faster we get to financial stability sounds sexy – there are no guarantees. We have to work smarter and not harder with our marketing – and I believe a lot of that comes down to having some intelligent email marketing funnels. But that’s a topic for a different day.

Now, just a reminder, if you’re interested in making 2021 the year you take on sustainable rapid releasing, I encourage you to check out the Author Revolution Publishing Quickstart Kit. It’s just \$27 and has tons of downloadable PDFs and digital tools ready for you to utilize. Not only will it help you get clear on your goals, but it will also give you a little bit of a head start if you decide to join Rapid Release Roadmap in January. If you’re interested in checking the QuickStart kit out, head over to authorrevolution.org/quickstart and get signed up.

Don’t forget that you can download today’s transcript or get more information to the items we talked about today by heading over to the show notes at authorrevolution.org/57.

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Alright my writerly friend, that’s it for this week.

Go forth and start your author revolution.



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