

Episode 94

Mon, 8/16 3:49PM 17:24

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

content, author, week, amazon, series, books, hiking, book, indie authors, guidelines, section, plan, branding, build, page, images, immortals, number, customer reviews, add

SPEAKERS

Carissa Andrews



Carissa Andrews 00:12

I'm Carissa Andrews, international best selling indie author and CEO of author revolution. With more than 15 books published, it's safe to say I have made a ton of mistakes in my endeavor to become a full time author. The most important thing that I've learned in the past decade is that indie authors need to protect their creativity and their serenity. Being an author is a long game. And that's why I'm on a mission to teach other indies just like you how to publish books because the sustainable rapid release method, I created the author revolution podcast to give you insights and actionable step by step strategies to help you do just that. If you're an ambitious author, or one of the making, who's looking to create a long term author, career and a life you love, you found your tribe, my friend. Let's get your author revolution underway. Well, Hey there and welcome back to the author revolution podcast, my writerly friend, I hope you've had a fantastic and engaged week full of writing and new words filling the page. I wish I could say it was the most prolific ever but, of course, it decided to start my six week writing sprint during a super weird week for all of us here at the ED Bruce clan household. On Wednesday, we had a planned trip to the Twin Cities. And so we were bringing our kids to the Science Museum of Minnesota as well as bringing them to Minnesota as largest candy store. Yes, that's his actual name. And because we live north of the city is this means a three hour drive to the Science Museum, an hour drive from the Science Museum to the candy store. And then a three and a half hour drive back home. Needless to say, there were no new written words that day that my pa Jenny and I were planning to go to Madison, Wisconsin, I think I mentioned that last week for the mayhem in the Midwest Book Fair, it was gonna be super

cool. I was assigning author for this gig Finally, an author event where I could sign some books. Both her daughter Kayla and my husband color we're planning on coming with us. And then we found out the day before that it had been canceled. I was working like a lunatic trying to get everything caught up so that we could leave and it wasn't going to interfere with any work stuff. Needless to say, we did find out in time, we did not make the drive. Of course, it's all a COVID situation. And it's you know, all well and good. It makes sense to me. So at any rate, rather than wasting the weekend by just working because that's probably a column I would have done. We decided to still drop the kiddos off with my parents. They were looking forward to seeing the kids kids were looking forward to getting away. And we wanted to chill out, right. So we ended up going on a day trip to the east of us. So basically another two hour drive. And we went over to baning State Park to go hiking just a little bit south of Duluth. So if you know the Minnesota State at all, the Duluth area is just a little bit south of there. While there was no reading getting done this weekend, either we did go for a five and a half hour hike across some of the beautiful Cliff sides of the kettle River. It was absolutely stunning. We even managed to climb our way along Hell's Gate trail over to lower Hell's Gate trail, a portion that we didn't expect to cross, because everyone ahead of us was warning us that we're going to reach the end. And you'll know one wouldn't see it kind of thing. And they were turning back. So overall, obviously, we don't know what's good for us. We just continued on word and we ended up on the other side. But it was all fine. Overall, it was more than five miles hiked and climbed. And like I said, five hours of hiking. Thank God we didn't attempt to bring the kids with either, because I'll tell you, I don't think that would have gone down Well, I would have been having a heart attack probably the entire time. Or I would have been so annoyed by their incessant whining about how much longer we'd be there, that I probably wouldn't have been able to enjoy any of it. But if you end up this way, I do highly recommend all three of these locations that we went and visited this week. It was actually seriously awesome. It was one of those weeks where you just go this this right here is what it's all about having a little bit of breathing room with my writing with the automations of my businesses, to be able to take a breath to go on these trips and just enjoy what's around us. So basically, all of this is my roundabout way of saying that. For my week one though, of my six week writing sprint, I managed 4000 words not 10,000 like I planned, but I did have a great week and I feel ready to rock and roll this week and feel way more grounded than I did before. So I guess all that outdoor stuff can really do a person some good, but here's the thing. It's important to remember that he If you make plans, things can drill them. Obviously, even when you want to do one thing, sometimes you have to do another. The cool thing about being a creative is knowing that we always can roll with the punches, we can Zig instead of zag and all the other cliches that you can think of because our brains do really allow us to see opportunities where others typically just see challenges. Now, this week, I do plan to write more, I do plan to get my ducks in a row, I do plan to hit my goals for Immortals. It's a totally normal week for me again. But even if

something strange comes up, We Just Pull Up Our Pants and hot mess our way through it. You know what I mean? Okay, so this week, as much as I'd like to talk about mindset, because obviously, you may have guessed, that's kind of where I'm at still, I actually want to talk about something that I've been tinkering with for the past few weeks. It's pretty new. And I think it's going to be something that's going to really excite a lot of you. It's called a plus content for authors, and it's over on Amazon's back dashboard. I stumbled on a plus content in early July, and I've been playing around with the content builder, and trying to decide on the best content to use. Now, truth be told, I've tried a couple of different options, and they've been getting rejected. So now for the sake of myself and you, I've been digging in even deeper. So let's talk about this. What is a plus content? Well, have you ever noticed how on traditionally published books, they can have some more interactive imagery in a section that says from the publisher, I've noticed it and it's something that I've always wondered why indie authors don't have? Well, now we do know, sometimes it can be tiled images. Sometimes it's a really cool one photo, sometimes it goes deeper and extends the sales page. Sometimes it can talk about characters or branding, or those series in general. The common theme, though, is adding more details to build author and book branding, and really catch a reader's eye. As of right now you can build out a plus content for most of the Amazon marketplaces, a full list is available in Amazon's help topics for creating a plus content. So make sure you double check that. But in essence, what I recommend doing is starting with your native store to get the content approved before you go on and try other stores because like I said, it's kind of a pain in the butt. Or at least I found it to be a pain in the butt. Maybe it's just me because I like to tinker and try different things. But part of the reason for this is that Amazon will copy your approved content over to the marketplaces that use the same language. So that makes it way easier to build it out for other stores. So like I said, it's taken me a few tries to get approved. And I thought I was following all of the rules at first. So it's likely it's going to take you a few times if you try to build a robust page. Okay? What's cool, though, is that you have a lot of page builder options to choose from. So if you've ever built your own websites, or have a page builder, a back end of let's say, a WordPress site, this whole thing is pretty intuitive to use. It's a combination of text and images, and sections give you some pretty good guidelines on what to use and where now I go into them. But honestly, they're going to make a whole lot more sense if you just go do some digging in the site itself and have a look around. But from what I can tell, as you build this section out, you can only add up to five content modules. So probably in an effort to keep this page from getting too long, would be my guess, but highly recommend looking over the eight plus content examples, because that's really what's helped me the most, because Amazon highlights how to give you some ideas on how to get your content in there and approved quicker. So that's ultimately what I've ended up doing. As you build out your content, it's important to be thinking about branding here. So what exactly do you want your brand to say, when readers land on this content, I recommend keeping

colors and images as consistent as possible to the book or the series that you're dealing with here. So maybe tweak it for each series. If you've got multiple series. If it's a new book or a new branding, make sure you keep the content as visible and as consistent across all the series if it makes sense. Now, you're also going to want to keep your descriptions tight, and really concise. In order to entice your readers to click that Buy button. This isn't really the place to like have really long drawn out descriptions. It's more of the hot, flashy, really juicy. This is why you're going to want to read this series type content. So ultimately, this section is really here, like I said, to enhance your brand, and your brand story for your book or your series that you're promoting. Another cool thing that happens when you finish up the content build is that you then add your essence that you want this content to be shown on so you don't have to build it for each individual book. If they're all in a series for example, instead you build it once, then you apply all of the lessons in that series. It makes things super easy. And as a tip, don't forget to add in your paperback ISBN ends as well because they're also eligible for the A plus content. So make sure like if you've got both of those, let's say it's a four book series, and you've got an ebook and paperback, make sure all eight of those books then are showing up. Okay, so when you're building your content, here are a few of the content guidelines that you're going to need to be most mindful of. Number one, you cannot put your prices on any of the content. So none of the images, none of the written content, you want to keep things as clean and clear of any kind of pricing. Probably because prices change, things shift. And they really don't want that kind of stuff. In this particular section. Number two, you can only do comparisons against your own books within the comparison charts. So this is a section that looks like it could be really useful in order to highlight some differences between your books. But you're going to want to be very careful, because obviously, you can't compare it against other authors. Number three, do not put customer reviews in the text unless they're from well known publications or sources. And of those, you can only actually promote four. But if you do want to add customer reviews, remember, you can go to the editorial review section inside of author central to add those there instead, then they're still highlighted, it's still a part of your sales page. And it can still be front and center. So just keep that part in mind. Number four is no time sensitive information. Again, because things change, they don't want time sensitive information on the page, they want to keep it as generic and as broad as possible. Five, any awards or recognitions must be proven. And according to the content guidelines, they should not be more than two years old. So if you've got an award for, say, a some sort of writing contest, you know, five years ago, and it was prestigious, that's great. They just don't want you promoting it in this particular section. Number six, you cannot include links of any kind, or invite people to leave Amazon's site inside that section. So you have to keep it clean and clear and all about you as an author or your branding with your books. Okay. Number seven, you cannot list out your essence, this is something I actually found out. So when I was putting in my content for the Diana, Hawthorn series, I wanted to have an easy way for them to know, you know,

which books all went together. So I figured, well, that's fine, we'll put the titles and then stick the aces right at the end of it, people are kind of used to seeing that. But unfortunately, Amazon kicked it back out and said, Hey, we don't want you using aces to any other particular product XYZ in here. So I had to remove all of the lessons from it and just use their titles. And then number eight, obviously, you need to own the rights to all of the images and the content that you're putting in there. So if you are, you know, putting information in there regarding your books, you need to be the person who has written it, if you're using images, you need to be downloading them or creating them from a site that allows you to put it into a sales page like Amazon. So all those things are very important. Now, assuming all goes well, Amazon says that once your content is approved, it appears on your detail pages within eight business days. So far, I will say that the content I've done is still sitting in review. But I'm hopeful that this time around, it's going to be accepted. And so I'll let you know next week, if that's the case. Now, if you're as excited as I am and want to get started, where do you go about finding the place to do your A plus content to start creating? Well, that's a great question. So I'm going to walk you through this, it's very easy. So if you have a pen paper, now might be a good time to get it out. The first thing that you're going to need to do is sign into your KDP dashboard on Amazon. Then you click on the three little dots that are beside any of your Kindle ebooks. It really doesn't matter which one you choose, because it'll open up into its own kind of dashboard type situation. So if the book is published, there should be a button that says promote and advertise and it's just to the right side of that. Then depending on whether or not your book is in the KDP Select program, you're looking for either eight KDP, select info, or an enroll in KDP Select menu option in the drop down that happens when you click those three little dots. You're going to click on that and then bypass the pop up that shows up always wanting to either enroll you or renew your KDP Select enrollment because obviously that's not the part that we're wanting to worry about here. When you're in that page, you're going to scroll to the middle and you'll see where it says a plus content. Either look over those content guidelines just to the left, or you can select your marketplace and click manage a plus content. Then it opens that new dashboard and it's time to experiment. Now each section gives you some pretty clear guidelines on image sizes and all that good fun stuff. So it should be fairly simple to hit those guidelines and to really make sure that the content makes sense and it is formatted correctly. Overall I think the A plus content on me is going to be a great way we authors can leverage our series, and tailor the user experience for readers who might be new to our worlds. So there you have it, my friends, it's a really cool new thing that's happening on Amazon in the back dashboard. It's something that we haven't seen before. So I hope you're gonna give it a try. With a little bit of luck. Hopefully, you found today's episode to be helpful. Like I said, it's gonna be a fun experiment. Now, if you have more questions on a plus content for Amazon, be sure to head over to author revolutions online community on Facebook and ask away, you can also dive into the links in today's show notes for Amazon's a plus content or download a transcript from today's

podcast episode, by going over to authorrevolution.org, forward slash 94. Remember, you can just scroll down to the bottom of the page to find the download transcript button. Also, don't forget, if you want to get in on that extended plan your series challenge without all the hassle of the deadlines or the timeframes, you can still join up at authorrevolution.org forward slash plan your series. It's all one word plan your series, the cost of the challenge is just \$97, which is also 100% deductible from the rapid release roadmap program when you choose to enroll in this larger course. And of course, I think you'll want to do that because it's a really great program. Okay, well, my friend, that's all I have for you for this week. It's going to be a lot of fun to see how many of you dig into the A plus content and start to really create some cool things. So make sure you head over to that author revolution online community and let us know what you did. I want to know what kind of content you created and how you're making it all happen. Show us some pictures if you can, because I would love to see that as well. All right, well, I'm going to head out to dig into Immortals and get some of my reading done for this week. I hope you're about to do the same. Go forth and start your author revolution.