

Episode 215

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SPEAKERS

Carissa Andrews



Carissa Andrews 00:04

The indie author revolution has been around for more than a decade, the Wii indies continue to push the boundaries of what we're capable of. From getting over initial prejudices, to staring down perfectionism and author impostor syndrome, we've become a force to reckon with. Now, after years of hustle and grind, we indies are rebelling again. Gone are the days of publishing a book a month until we drop, and in its place, we're sowing the seeds of a better way away with more ease, abundance and flow. Get ready to learn about indie authorship from a whole new perspective. We're about to cover everything from releasing your poverty mentality to manifesting your millionaire author destiny. I'm Carissa Andrews, and this is the Author Revolution Podcast. Well, hi, there, everybody. Welcome to our final 2023 podcast episode here at the Author Revolution Podcast. So in the past, I've done kind of reflection posts, I've done posts on like how you can, you know, get into the vibe of your next new year. If you want more of that sort of situation, I will link a few of those types of shows in the show notes here. This year, I decided to kind of give myself a little bit more insight into what I think 2024 is going to look like what the big landscape is going to be all about. So I'm going to share three of the trends, the top indie author trends for 2024 that I think indie authors really need to be paying attention to. And if they're not, now's the time, okay, now's the time to start paying attention to these trends, because they're starting to get and gain more momentum. So indie authorship, we know that this is kind of an evolutionary thing, right? We've been in this game for a while we've been seeing the trends go up and down, we've been seeing how things have evolved. And some of the trends, you know, when they snowball, when they start to create momentum. For a lot of people who have, you know, this knee jerk reaction where things are not peachy, like they don't like change, just to say it mildly. Right? People don't always like change. I on the other hand, I love change. It's one of my favorite things in the world. As long as the change is good, as long as the change is showing me that it's like a trend moving towards some transformation are some like new, cool things are coming down the road, and not you know, like a dog dying, you know, you know what I'm saying? It's not always fun when change happens. But for the most part, I do like the transformation that change brings, it does always, will almost always offer a way of viewing perceiving being in the world in a slightly different way. And yes, even a dog dying, for instance, I can look at my life having lost a dog this year, and go okay, well, is my life a little bit easier. I guess technically. I mean, I'm one dog down. He was definitely the obnoxious dog of the two, you know, always getting into trouble and mischief

and eating things he shouldn't obviously. So does that make my life easier? Yeah, it does. But does that negate the fact that we miss them? Does it negate the fact that he had a personality that was so big? Does it negate the fact that my remaining dog lost his brother, you know what I mean? So there's always those trade offs. But when you can look at change in a way that says, hey, this new thing could bring in something powerful and awesome in the future. That's where change can be pretty cool. So of course, Trend number one is one such change. And that's AI for authors, right? So there's so many people, it's a hot topic for many who don't understand the context of how AI is being used, they won't even test it out themselves, they will try it, they will look at it. However, that does not mean AI is not going to keep going right? It doesn't mean AI will not continue to be the big thing that needs to be harnessed, that needs to be understood that needs to be utilized in the creation of whatever it is you're doing, right. And you can use it in whatever the way you want. It's just that when you understand how it's used, how it works, how to level it up in your own world. Now all of a sudden, the usage of AI is no longer a scary thing, and you're able to do so much with it. So that includes AI content creation and editing. And we've talked about these things like in my classes and podcast episodes, but AI content creation and editing is huge. So everything from writing your social media posts to helping you get ideas for subject lines for your newsletter to like creating some new short stories to even Yes, co creating some of your content when it comes to your books if you choose to use it that way. Custom diabetes have definitely leveled that Langfield when it comes to AI helping you write a book, it can gain your knowledge of the world by you uploading your book or your previous works that are in a series and understanding the dynamics of the whole series so far, you can upload images, and have it researched through the web in order to understand things and the more you use it, it learns your style of writing. I mean, it's very powerful at what it does, and it's getting better every single day. Of course, you can also use AI in your art and design. So authors are exploring how to use it for book cover designs for promotional materials. And all of these things are still valid, even if no one thinks they are. Even if your circle says, it's the worst idea ever. There are still valid uses that you can play around with, if that sounds and feels good to you don't let other people who are not in the bell curve where they are in the early adopters section, if they're not there yet, and they're like the stragglers that come behind, it's up to you to lead the way and be the example. So don't take your advice from people who are those change naysayers, okay. And then there's also all sorts of practical applications that authors are using AI for, like, you can use it for workflow ideas that you can use it to help you figure out your strategic plan for the year, you can have AI help you assess your ads to learn whether or not certain ad segments should be shut off or scaled back up, you can use it for reaching out to your audience in a new way and creating new content that you've never dreamed of creating before. Truly the the uses of AI right now, the limitations are only what you have in your mind. And it's something to be considering it's something to be looking more closely at. And if you haven't played around with it yet. I really think this is an area where you need to put a little bit more time and effort into and if nothing else, just play around with it. Okay, obviously, I'm a big fan. I use Chat GPT for I like custom GPT is I think they are so powerful and useful. That I don't think I will ever go back to completely doing things all on my own. Because it's revolutionized the way that I think about my business, the way that I think about things. It's like having the best PA or the best assistant in the planet, who is ready to have a word with you about whatever it is you're trying to figure it out, or whatever it is that you want to try to brainstorm and come up with. It is just awesome. Okay. So Trend number two is obviously direct sales. We've talked a lot about direct sales this year. But I think we need to talk a little bit about the growing importance of direct sales, because there's a shift that's been happening for indie authors, this industry has been around for over a decade now. And authors are starting to see how being beholden to retailers and platforms that are kind of like consigning with them. Maybe it's not the best way to reach their readers, maybe there's a better way, right. So selling directly to the reader is selling directly

and being able to reach readers to be able to give them sales to have their email addresses to get the reviews right on your website. All of that is so powerful. And it's been so much fun to play around with as an indie author who is doing it, I use Shopify. So for those of you who have been listening for a while you already know that but I've been using Shopify since the end of July of this year, absolutely love, it was the best decision I have ever made. Other than and this is still yet to be seen switching genres or adding a new genre to my mix. Because burnout is a thing, especially when you've been writing in a certain genre for a while. And so having a new one to writing has been kind of fun, right? And we'll have 2020 for to see whether or not that new pen name lives up to its expectations. But there are other tools beyond Shopify that you can obviously use when it comes to direct sales. You know, sites like Patreon right now are already starting to include ways for authors ways for creators, to be able to sell their merchandise to be able to sell their direct downloads and the things that they need to do right there in their own website, their own e commerce platform integration, which is really cool. And so even if you don't want to have a store unnecessarily, where you are using your website as your bookstore, why not try out Patreon in that regard, why not take a look at how that's working. Because Patreon is not only a you know, a fun platform as a content creator, but it it gives you some social freedom. There's so many social media platforms that will just you know hinder your reach and the it will make seeing what you have to offer horribly impossible. And what's nice about Patreon is that one patron supporters are paying to see your content. Now they are getting your content, they get notifications as push notifications when you put new things into your site. They are engaged, they are excited to talk to you Gone are those days of like where you're screaming into the void. And now that was something that I was testing out this year, will Patreon be a place that I enjoy? Now, I haven't put a lot of energy and effort into expanding it or growing it. I've mostly been trying to get my groove on, right. I've been trying to figure out do I like this platform? Do I like doing things here? Am I enjoying this process? I write my books, and I'm putting them out a chapter at a time on the site. Is it working for me? Are readers responding? And the answer is yes. So for 2024 My goal is to expand my Patreon reach to expand my direct sales reach. And now Speaking of Patreon, I want to mention this now before I forget, only James, she has been on the podcast a couple of times, and incredible person when it comes to Patreon. I mean, she can do some freaking awesome things when it comes to Patreon. Her like monthly income through Patreon alone is closing in on \$20,000 A month guys. And now she has a new course that she's launching. And it's coming out right now. It's in like the beta launch for it. And I will put it in the link in the show notes so that you can check it out because it will be going up in price. And only is the only one I know that is doing this type, of course this type of teaching and you can make some incredible amount of money. And so I'm going to be taking it I'm actually in the course waiting for it to launch in January, and can't wait for it because I'm going to be taking her advice on how to build my Patreon, all of them have three and build them to a point of gaining more momentum. And I can't wait. But having a reader community is so powerful, whether it be on your Shopify store, whether it be on a Patreon site. We talked about this a little bit last week with Joe Solari and how having that community gives you that cumulative advantage. And authors are looking for that right now. They're looking for how do we create a cumulative advantage where readers are coming to us they are clamoring to get our books. It's not us screaming into the void saying buy my book. It's not us going, oh my gosh, how do I get more readers? It's them being magnetized to us because they enjoy our personality. They enjoy what we do they understand what we're all about, right? And so it doesn't matter if it's Shopify, it doesn't matter if it's WooCommerce, it doesn't matter if it's payhip. What matters is how are you utilizing these tools to build your community where readers understand who you are and what they get to receive. And one of the things that Joe talked about last week, that has stuck with me that I am in the process of considering and trying to figure out how is it going to work for me is having that very expected release schedule, so to speak, that's something I've never been super good at, okay. Even

though I've published three to four books every single year, I've never been great at going, Okay, this is always the month I publish, this is always the month I publish so that my readers know and can expect when the next book comes. And so for 2024 I want to decide like, is there a specific month, wherever year I want to start publishing, for you know, each of the pet names so that those audiences know that in January, you're always going to see a new one nightstand club book in July, you're always going to see an accidental alpha or urban fantasy book, you know, whatever, I want to have that understanding. And that was something that really helped Katie Cross, when she was expanding her own stuff. I mean, granted, she's writing a book a month, which is amazing, and not quite where I want to be. But other people might. And for her, it obviously is working. And so it's about understanding what you want, what fits in your schedule and how it gets to work. But with the ultimate goal of that community outreach, a community building aspect, and that's what direct sales expansion is all about. Doesn't matter if you're doing it in a serialization or if you're doing it just like your store your bookstore on your site. It's all about community. It's about bringing those readers to you. Okay, Trend number three, cross media opportunities. Now, this is something I haven't really dove into a whole lot. It's something that I've been thinking about, especially when I was at I think it was Idaho, Idaho Writers Conference and Rachel Van Dyken was there and she was talking about all the different ways that authors can, you know, use cross media to promote their books. So anything from like books to screen adaptations, because these things are happening all the time. Like you can increase your the trend of your books, you can increase the view of your books, the sales of your books, by thinking about ways to turn them into movies or TV shows, and getting more eyes on what you do in different ways. Because the bigger media companies and movie companies, TV shows, they're always looking for unique stories. They don't always want to write their own screenplays, if they can help it, right. So if they can get some good source material to create a show or a movie, they're very excited about that. And so a lot of authors are actually looking into screen adaptations. And I know Rachel Van Dyken was definitely one that was talking about how powerful that can be for authors and indie authors. And it's not something that I think a lot of authors are talking about, or a lot of other teachers are talking about. So keep your eye on ways to be able to expand that reach through these types of things. Another way to use crossmedia adaptations, is actually interactive storytelling using visual novels. They're also known as V ns. And now I don't know if any of you have explored how authors are branching into interactive storytelling, but VLANs are actually really cool. Now, there's also a V ns, which are adult visual novels. And I know that there are a couple of them out there that are really gaining popularity right now I've seen podcasts talking about them things like leap of faith. And when the storytelling is good, when the music and the other aspects of it are good, not only are you getting the adult part of the AVN, but you're getting a great story with it. Now authors doesn't, you don't have to do you know, an erotic version of romance version, a naughty version of a visual novel in order to make it really work. You can create, you know, science fiction, visual novels, you can do a romance visual novel that Swede you could do whatever you wanted, and allow each one of the slides each one of the scenes to tell the story. And it just, it's a little bit more of a it's almost almost borderlining augmented reality, in a sense, because now you're seeing the story. It's not quite a TV show. It's not quite a movie, but it's somewhere in between, right. And it's really interesting, because if you're doing a visual novel, you as the reader are making choices. So it's almost like a game. You know, it's like those, choose your own endings, like books, where you're like, Okay, when you are at this point, you make a decision, turn to page 42, you know, whatever. It's the same kind of concept. And it's just a more visual way of doing that type of storytelling, super cool. Then also cross media opportunities. I want you to be thinking and keeping your eye on metaverse. I know, I know, I know Facebook is it's a beast. It's a like, I don't know about it. I'm sick of it. I'm kind of bored with it. But there's things that we need to be paying attention to. And the reason why we have to pay attention to it is because Facebook's not putting a whole lot of energy and effort

into Facebook anymore, right? There's a reason why they call it meta. There's a reason why they're shifting their alliances to something different. Publishers right now are exploring how to adapt physical commerce experiences a book buying newspaper reading, viewing ads, you know, like all sorts of things, creating a personalized, immersive content experience within meta. So this transition, it's likely to reshape advertising models, consumer interactions, it's going to have a greater emphasis, obviously on data privacy and user control, but Metaverse is opening up a realm of possibilities for authors and publishers from creating those unique digital collectibles. So kind of thing kind of like blockchains and NFT's and if you don't know what that is, you need to go over to Joanna Penn's podcast and explore her podcast because it's really fascinating stuff. But all of these new things that are happening in Metaverse are helping, like shape and create new experiments and experiences with these new forms of storytelling like in AR and VR, because they're looking at all the games that are, you know, coming up, and that they're really popular and they almost have an AR experience to them things like fortnight and to their others, oh my gosh, there's so many others. But where like you can go and have like a virtual experience that should be like, normally in a real life thing. You can have concerts, you could go to malls and do all sorts of things in a virtual environment, sitting in your own house, and now reading and buying books and doing that type of thing. Audio Visual books, visual novels, you know, those sort of things. All of this can be done within the metaverse. So there is something there's something growing here guys, and I'm going to tell you right now, if you're not keeping an eye on it, don't be surprised if in a couple of years time, all of a sudden Metaverse is the next big thing because they are working very deeply gently in an like evolving rapidly changing landscape, I mean, obviously, they've been working on this for a while they have the Oculus already in play, there's a lot of things that are going on there. So keep an eye out. Okay, just do me that favor and keep your eye on what Mehta is doing, because I have a feeling that in a couple of years time, there's going to be some big news coming out of that camp. So I'm just going to list five more things. I know we've already talked about three that I want you to really to keep your eyes on right now. But there's a few more that I want you to have on your radar just in case number one, audiobooks and serial podcasts for books. So like people who are using podcasting platforms in order to drop a chapter a week, for instance, like audiobooks are making up a huge amount of the marketplace. And it's something to if you're not already investing in, it's something to either invest in or start working on, or start narrating yourself or start looking into AI content generation for audiobooks, okay? Even Amazon is starting to allow AI audiobooks find a way of starting to open the doors for AI audiobooks, it's something to keep your eye on and be thinking about. So number two subscription based models, we talked about Patreon, but there are others, right? So you could be using things like Kindle Vella, you could be using things like rrim, it doesn't mean you know radish, doesn't matter which ones that you're using. But keep your eyes on the way subscription based models are evolving, and which ones are putting energy and effort into the way they work for authors. In specific the two that are, in my mind, the most prevalent, and the ones that work for a lot more genres of authors is going to definitely be Patreon and rrim. So be keeping an eye on those. And if you're not involved with those platforms, be thinking about joining them. Three is diversification and, and inclusivity. And storytelling, we're seeing a lot more, you know, diversity in our stories, whether it be LGBTQ IA, or if it's, you know, the black community, people with disabilities, people who are, you know, neurodivergent, it doesn't matter, whatever the diversification and inclusivity is, in your world that you want to expand on or you wish was in a story or you wish was in, you know, mainstream media, whatever. at it, like readers are clamoring for it, they are loving, having that opportunity. And indie authors are at the forefront of that because we can give to the readers what they want in real time. Where traditional storytelling, traditional publishers are a little bit more nervous, typically about doing things like that. So it's up to us to lead the way. And if you're interested in doing that, if you want to showcase it, go for it. Okay, number four is NFT 's and blockchains. And publishing. I've said

that already, briefly. But if you're not paying attention to this and how it works, it's super fascinating stuff. It's a little confusing if you don't know much about it. So that's why I said, I very much encourage you to check out Joanna Penn's podcast, she is great at explaining. But in essence, it's about being able to create a digital content that is kind of like a collectible it is given a digital token that basically represents ownership of unique items or assets, right? They're stored on a blockchain. And the blockchain itself is kind of like a digital ledger or a record book, right? It keeps all of your NF T's in place. So when you have something that is a digital collectible, these people, they have proof that they have this collectible, digital version. Okay. So it's like, you know, having a signed book, it's like having a collectible version of a book from Kickstarter, or whatever. But it's a digital format. And so it's very fascinating to see the way that this is revolutionizing digital creation, authors, artists, people who are, you know, utilizing the digital technologies to deliver some sort of asset to a customer, a consumer, whatever, we should all be paying attention to this because it can allow us to not only get better royalties from it, but also, if the NF T's are ever sold, we can get another set of kickbacks from that as well. And so it's very, it's something to be looking at, dig a little bit deeper into it. If you're interested in it. I think it's fascinating. It's something I'll be looking into in 2024, so that I can understand it even better. But obviously, Joanna pen is amazing. So check her podcast out and learn about it. And then finally, global expansion. Now this is something that's been going for a while. I think we're going to find that through the direct sales platforms and selling to our readers. This is already kind of happening for us. But this can also mean like translations, right? It can mean getting those German translations because that's such a big open market space for authors and it's one The best places to begin your translation aspect of it. So be thinking about like, is there a way to expand further? Are there more sites that I can get my books into? Is there any other places that I can be thinking about? beyond the basics. And I think all of that is very powerful. It's such a power move for indie authors. And it's a power move for us as revolutionaries, to come up with new ways to do what we love, get paid for what we love, and reach our readers and have that community grow and expand. Okay. So just to recap, Trend number one, AI for authors, Trend number two, direct sales expansion, Trend number three cross media opportunities. And then of course, there were those five extra bonus ones that I gave you too, just because so I want you to be looking at those trends. Think through which ones you really want to, you know, keep your biggest eye on or maybe start incorporating or playing around with, if you haven't used AI yet, maybe that's the one doesn't matter which one it is, but just be thinking about how do you want to feel in 2024? How do you want your, you know, author career to look, how do you want to touch the lives of your readers? What does it get to look like for you? Because that's ultimately where this is all coming down to we are deciding now again, what do we want? How do we want to do it? And is there a better way than what we've been doing it before? And I think there is there has been and that's why we're all kind of shifting into this new place. So fun to watch. It's so fun to see, authors engaging with it, understanding it, learning how it works, and implementing it. So it's pretty powerful stuff, guys. I'm so humbled and excited to be a part of this group to be a part of, you know, this community of authors and how we are expanding how we're transforming and changing the face of authorship. It's so, so freakin cool. I love it. Alright, guys, so that's, that's it. That's our final 2023 a podcast episode. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did recording it for you. And I'm actually recording it early so that I can take the final week of December off. So as of right now, if you're listening to this podcast episode, I should be sitting on my couch enjoying another book. I have no idea what I'll be reading at this point. But probably a book. Maybe I'll be reorganizing my library. I'm not quite sure. All I know is I am not going to be working like at least not in the traditional sense. Maybe I'll even be finishing up Gilmore Girls finally with my daughter. I have no idea. It should be interesting. So at any rate, enjoy this final week of

December. Enjoy your New Year's Eve and New Year's Day transition into 2024. I hope you have big dreams. I hope you have your sights set on them. And I hope you go forth and start your author revolution.