



Learning with SDP | Let's Talk About It

Platform Comparison Chart & Legal Compliance Checklist

All the free tools — pick one and start today

Newsletter Platform Comparison

All five platforms below have free tiers. You only need ONE. Once your list exceeds 1,000 subscribers, revisit your platform choice — that's a good problem to have.

Platform	Free Limit	Automation?	Landing Pages?	Best For
MailerLite mailerlite.com ★★★★★	Up to 500 subscribers	Yes — welcome sequence, drip series	Yes — included	Best overall for authors starting out. Drag-and-drop. Clean interface. Strong automation on free tier.
Mailchimp mailchimp.com ★★★★☆	Up to 500 subscribers	Limited on free tier	Yes	Most recognized platform. Good if you're already using it. Free tier cap dropped to 500 in 2019.
Substack substack.com ★★★★☆	Unlimited (Substack takes 10% of paid subs)	No — manual sends only	Yes — your Substack page IS your landing page	Best for authors who want newsletter-as-blog. Readers can find you on Substack. Not ideal for automations.
ConvertKit / Kit kit.com ★★★★★	Up to 1,000 subscribers	Yes — excellent sequence builder	Yes	Built specifically for creators. Best automation and tagging system. Slightly steeper learning curve.
BookFunnel bookfunnel.com Delivery tool	Free tier — 20 downloads/month	No (email delivery only)	Yes — reader magnet delivery pages	Not a newsletter platform — it delivers your reader magnet. Pair with MailerLite or ConvertKit for the full system.

Personally I would recommend Substack but if you have a WordPress website then the Free Plugin: "Newsletter" works wonders. Each of the above have their pros and cons. Only you can decide which one will work for you today. Next month or even next year you may have the urge to try something new.

Legal Compliance Checklist

Seth Godin calls it permission marketing for a reason. Having someone's email is a privilege. This checklist keeps you on the right side of the law and your readers' trust.

CAN-SPAM Act (USA)

- Include a clear, working unsubscribe link in every email
- Include your physical mailing address (PO Box is fine)
- Honor unsubscribe requests within 10 business days
- Don't use deceptive subject lines or sender names
- Clearly identify the email as an advertisement if it is one

GDPR (European readers)

- You must have explicit consent — implied permission is not enough for EU subscribers
- Keep records of how and when each subscriber opted in
- Honor data deletion requests promptly
- Your privacy policy must explain how you use their data

Permission types

- Implied permission: existing customers/clients who have done business with you
- Express permission: someone who signed up using your opt-in form — the gold standard
- Never: purchased lists, scraped addresses, or contacts added without their knowledge

General best practices

- Use double opt-in when possible — confirms consent and improves deliverability
- Conduct list hygiene quarterly — remove hard bounces and inactive subscribers
- Your platform handles the mechanics — set up your physical address in account settings

Bottom line: If someone gave you their email address through an opt-in form, you're good. If you found their email somewhere and added it without asking, don't. It's that simple.