



Southern Dragon Publishing

Let's Talk About It | Website 101 Workshop

HANDOUT 2 OF 2 | Build Checklist: Pages, Legal & Tech

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Name: _____ Date: _____

SECTION 1 | Essential Pages: Planning Worksheet

Every author website should have these core pages. Check off each one as you plan or build it. Use the notes lines to capture your content ideas.

☐ HOME PAGE

REQUIRED

Your first impression. Visitors should know within 3 seconds who you are and what you write.

Must-have elements:

- ☐ Tagline that instantly communicates your genre and voice
- ☐ Your most recent or most popular book cover (large, clickable)
- ☐ Brief welcome statement (2-3 sentences maximum)
- ☐ Prominent newsletter signup call-to-action
- ☐ Navigation links to all your other pages

My tagline idea:

☐ ABOUT PAGE

REQUIRED

Where readers connect with the person behind the books. Write in first person, conversational voice.

Must-have elements:

- ☐ Professional author photo — readers want to see your face
- ☐ Your writing origin story, brief and engaging
- ☐ Genres you write and why you love them
- ☐ One fun personal detail that makes you relatable
- ☐ Link to your newsletter signup

One sentence about why I write:

☐ BOOKS PAGE (or individual series pages)

REQUIRED

Your catalog. If you write multiple genres or series, consider a separate page per series.

Must-have elements:

- ☐ Cover image for every published book
- ☐ Short description — 2 to 4 sentences, not the full blurb
- ☐ Buy links: Amazon, Barnes & Noble, IngramSpark, Bookshop.org, your direct store

- ☐ Series reading order if applicable
- ☐ Coming soon section for works in progress

My series or genre groupings:

☐ NEWSLETTER / MAILING LIST PAGE

REQUIRED

Your most valuable page. This is how you own your reader relationship independent of any platform.

Must-have elements:

- ☐ Clear headline stating what subscribers receive
- ☐ Specific frequency promise such as Monthly newsletter, no spam
- ☐ Reader magnet or freebie offer if you have one
- ☐ Simple embed form from MailerLite, ConvertKit, or Mailchimp
- ☐ Brief privacy reassurance: I will never share your email

What I will offer subscribers:

☐ CONTACT PAGE

REQUIRED

Makes you accessible to readers, media, event organizers, and book clubs — without exposing your personal email.

Must-have elements:

- ☐ Contact form — NOT your direct email address
- ☐ Clear statement of who you welcome hearing from
- ☐ Response time expectation such as I respond within 5-7 business days
- ☐ Social media links
- ☐ Separate media inquiry note if applicable

Form platform I will use:

☐ BIO AND PUBLICITY PACKAGE PAGE

RECOMMENDED

For media, podcasters, event organizers, and bloggers who need ready-to-use materials.

Must-have elements:

- ☐ Short bio — 50 words
- ☐ Medium bio — 100 to 150 words
- ☐ Long bio — 250 to 300 words
- ☐ High-resolution author photo as a downloadable link
- ☐ Book covers — downloadable, high resolution
- ☐ List of interview topics or speaking subjects
- ☐ Media contact email

My three bio lengths drafted? Check when done:

☐ **PRIVACY POLICY PAGE****REQUIRED***LEGALLY REQUIRED the moment you collect email addresses or use Google Analytics. Not optional.***Must-have elements:**

- ☐ What data you collect and why
- ☐ How you use cookies — required if using Google Analytics
- ☐ Whether you share data with third parties such as your email platform
- ☐ How visitors can request their data be deleted
- ☐ Date the policy was last updated

Generator I will use — Termly.io or iubenda.com:☐ **TERMS OF SERVICE PAGE****RECOMMENDED***Required if you sell anything directly on your site — even a single ebook.***Must-have elements:**

- ☐ What you sell and on what terms
- ☐ Refund and return policy
- ☐ Disclaimers
- ☐ Jurisdiction — which state's laws govern disputes
- ☐ Contact information for disputes

Do I sell direct? If yes this page is required:

SECTION 2 | Newsletter Platform Comparison

Your email platform is separate from your website host. Your website just embeds a sign up form from whichever platform you choose.

Platform	Free Tier	Landing Pages	WP Embed	Ease of Use	Best For Authors Who...
MailerLite	Free up to 1,000 subs	Yes — generous	Yes, free plan	Excellent	Best starting choice. Clean interface, good automation on free plan.
ConvertKit / Kit	Free up to 1,000 subs	Yes, limited free	Yes, free plan	Excellent	Built for creators. Strong automation. Slightly steeper learning curve.
Mailchimp	Free up to 500 subs	Yes, free plan	Yes, free plan	Good	Most well-known. Free plan now more limited. Better for larger lists.
Flodesk	\$38/mo flat rate	No free plan	Yes (all plans)	Excellent	Beautiful emails. Flat pricing is great once your list passes 1,000.
Substack	Free (10% of paid)	N/A (own platform)	Built-in	N/A	Good for newsletter-as-content. Limited website embed integration.

The newsletter platform I will use:**Why I chose it:**

SECTION 3 | SEO Basics for Author Websites

SEO helps readers find you on Google. You don't need to become an expert — just get the basics right on every page.

- ☐ **Page Titles:** Every page has a unique title including your name and what the page is about.

Tip: Example: Sarah Jane Moore — Romance Author | About

- ☐ **Meta Descriptions:** Each page has a 150 to 160 character description for Google search results.

Tip: Write yours in plain language as if talking directly to a reader.

- ☐ **Alt Text on Images:** Every book cover and author photo has descriptive alt text.

Tip: Example: Cover of The Midnight Garden, a paranormal romance novel by Sarah Moore

- ☐ **Keywords in Content:** Your genre, subgenre, and comparable authors appear naturally in your text.

Tip: Don't stuff keywords — write for readers first, Google second.

- ☐ **Google Search Console:** Your site is registered and verified with Google Search Console (free).

Tip: This tells Google your site exists and lets you monitor search performance.

- ☐ **Site Speed:** Your pages load in under 3 seconds on mobile.

Tip: Test free at PageSpeed Insights — pagespeed.web.dev. Compress images first.

- ☐ **Mobile Friendly:** Every page looks and works correctly on a phone screen.

Tip: Test free at Google's Mobile-Friendly Test tool.

SECTION 4 | Mobile Responsiveness Checklist

Over 60% of readers will visit your site on a phone. A site that looks broken on mobile loses those readers immediately — and hurts your Google ranking.

- ☐ Text is readable without zooming — *Minimum 16px body font size*
- ☐ Navigation menu works on mobile — *Hamburger menu or simplified nav for small screens*
- ☐ Book covers are not distorted or cut off — *Images scale proportionally on all screen sizes*
- ☐ Contact form fields are easy to tap — *Input fields are large enough for finger taps*
- ☐ Buttons are at least 44x44 pixels — *Small buttons frustrate and lose mobile users*
- ☐ No horizontal scrolling required — *All content fits within the screen width*
- ☐ Newsletter signup form works on mobile — *Test the actual form submission on your phone*
- ☐ Site loads in under 3 seconds on mobile — *Check with Google PageSpeed Insights*
- ☐ Social media links open correctly on mobile — *Test every link on your own phone*
- ☐ Buy links open in the correct app or browser — *Amazon links should open in the Amazon app or site*

How to test: Open your website on your phone. Try every link, form, and button. Ask a friend with a different device to do the same. The free tool responsivedesignchecker.com lets you preview on dozens of screen sizes.

SECTION 5 | Backup Policy and Site Speed (CDN)

Backup Policy — Do Not Skip This

Websites get hacked, servers crash, and mistakes happen. Without backups, you could lose everything. Verify your host's backup policy before signing up.

- ☐ My host performs automatic daily backups
- ☐ I know how to access and restore a backup
- ☐ Backups are stored for at least 14 days
- ☐ I have a manual backup plugin installed (UpdraftPlus for WordPress — free)
- ☐ I have tested a backup restoration at least once

My host's backup policy:

Backup retention period:

CDN — Speed for Your Readers

A CDN stores copies of your site on servers worldwide so it loads fast regardless of where readers are. Cloudflare offers a free CDN compatible with almost any host.

- ☐ My host includes a CDN (ask them directly)
- ☐ OR: I have set up Cloudflare free CDN — cloudflare.com
- ☐ My images are compressed before uploading (TinyPNG.com — free)
- ☐ I have tested my site speed at PageSpeed Insights — pagespeed.web.dev
- ☐ My site scores 80 or above on PageSpeed mobile

SECTION 6 | Copyright Notice and DMCA Basics

Your writing, blog posts, author photos, and book descriptions are your intellectual property. Your website should make this clear.

Copyright Notice — Required on Every Page

Add this to your website footer, updating the year annually: © [Year] [Your Legal Name or Pen Name]. All rights reserved. No portion of this website or its content may be reproduced without express written permission.

My copyright notice text:

DMCA Protection

DMCA protection allows you to formally request removal of stolen content from other websites and from Google's search results.

- ☐ I have registered at DMCA.com (free badge available — adds a visible deterrent)
- ☐ I know how to file a DMCA takedown notice — dmca.com/Takedowns.aspx
- ☐ I have set up Google Alerts for my book titles to catch piracy early
- ☐ My author photos are watermarked or low-resolution for public use
- ☐ I save original high-resolution book cover files in a secure backup location

Save the DMCA takedown URL in your bookmarks now, before you need it: dmca.com/Takedowns.aspx

SECTION 7 | Google Analytics Setup Checklist

Google Analytics (GA4) is free and tells you how many people visit, what pages they read, how long they stay, and where they come from.

- ☐ **Step 1:** Create a Google Analytics account at analytics.google.com (uses your Google account)
- ☐ **Step 2:** Create a new GA4 property for your website
- ☐ **Step 3:** Copy your Measurement ID — format: G-XXXXXXXXXX
- ☐ **Step 4:** Add tracking code to your site (WordPress: use Site Kit by Google — free plugin)
- ☐ **Step 5:** Verify data is being collected by checking Real-Time reports
- ☐ **Step 6:** Set up Google Search Console and link it to your Analytics account
- ☐ **Step 7:** Review your analytics at least once per month

Key Metrics to Review Monthly

Total visitors	How many people found your site this month
Most visited pages	What content resonates with your readers
Traffic sources	Are visitors coming from Google, social media, or direct links?
Avg. time on page	Are readers engaging or bouncing away quickly?
Newsletter signups	Track conversions from your email signup form

Privacy note: Google Analytics collects visitor data and MUST be disclosed in your Privacy Policy. A generator like Termly.io will include the correct language automatically.

SECTION 8 | My Author Website Action Plan

Use this section to commit to your next steps before you leave today's session.

Track A — I Need a Website

- ☐ Register my domain name by: _____
- ☐ Choose my hosting provider by: _____
- ☐ Platform I will build on: _____
- ☐ Set up SSL certificate
- ☐ Build my 5 essential pages: Home, About, Books, Newsletter, Contact
- ☐ Add Privacy Policy page
- ☐ Set up my newsletter platform and embed signup form
- ☐ Register with Google Analytics
- ☐ Register with Google Search Console
- ☐ Test mobile responsiveness on my phone
- ☐ Set up automatic backups
- ☐ Add copyright notice to footer
- ☐ Create and upload my Bio and Publicity Package page
- ☐ Register with DMCA.com

Track B — Starting with a Free Alternative

- ☐ Set up Linktree or Carrd page by: _____
- ☐ Add all my book links, social media, and newsletter signup
- ☐ Update ALL social media bios with my new link
- ☐ Set up Amazon Author Central — author.amazon.com (free)
- ☐ Set up Goodreads Author Page — goodreads.com/author/program (free)
- ☐ Register my domain name now even if not ready to build yet
- ☐ Set a date 6 months from now to revisit the website decision:

My Single Most Important Next Step

What is the ONE thing I will do within the next 7 days?

Resources from Today's Session

Linktree: linktr.ee

Carrd: carrd.co

Google Sites: sites.google.com

WordPress.com: wordpress.com

Namecheap — domains: namecheap.com

MailerLite — newsletter: mailervite.com

ConvertKit / Kit — newsletter: kit.com

Google Analytics: analytics.google.com

PageSpeed Insights: pagespeed.web.dev

Termly — privacy policy: termly.io

DMCA Protection: dmca.com

Amazon Author Central: author.amazon.com

Southern Dragon Publishing: southerndragonpublishing.com

YouTube: Let's Talk About It: youtube.com — search Southern Dragon Publishing