**WHITE PAPER:**

**Steps to setting up an online brand – for erotica writers particularly, using WordPress specifically**

I did all of this by myself, based on previous blogging experiences, suggestions from friends, and observations about other writers’ sites. It seems a shame to waste the knowledge gained, so here you go! Keep in mind I’m both an old pro at web marketing and a newbie in the erotica industry, so I definitely have blind spots. Since it is simply mostly a “To Do” list, it does *not* contain detailed instructions on how to, say, pick or install a WP theme (you can find a lot of great tutorials on how to do almost anything on this list by googling the topic). Also, since this is all based on the steps I took, it features using WordPress CMS (Content Management System) on a hosted site; there are about 100 other ways to set up a blog, this is just one of them!

It would be great if people who are further “down the road” than I am could offer up suggestions of information to add. I will continue to update this as needed. <3

*~ Cooper West*

**TO DO**

1. Secure a blog
   1. Find hosting company, secure hosting
   2. Register domain
   3. Install WordPress
   4. Configure WP (this is what will take the most time)
      1. Theme
      2. Layout
      3. Graphics
      4. Plugins *(the following is a bare-bones suggestion; there are thousands of plugins, and it is worth your time to look around for what you need)*
         1. Akismit (spam control)
         2. Share and Follow (social networking made easy; I love this plugin above all others!)
         3. All in One SEO Pack (SEO made easy)
         4. WordPress.com Stats (not as much info at gAnalytics, but nice to have for easy checking)
         5. WP Super Cache (easy caching made easy)
         6. Google Analytics for WordPress (if you use this, you don’t much need the WP Stats plugin)
         7. Organize Series (if you plan to publish serialized stories on your blog)
         8. PollDaddy Polls (if you like polls)
         9. Ajax Edit Comments (not free! But very, very useful, and fairly cheap for what you get)
         10. Google XML Sitemaps (good for letting Google know you exist)
         11. My Link Order (will allow you to order your links as you like, instead of the default alphabetical setting)
         12. Feedburner Feedsmith (pretty necessary if you are using Feedburner)
   5. Sign up for Feedburner and gAnalytics, they will make your life easier.
   6. If you plan on monetizing:
      1. Text ads: GoogleAdSense is out, as they are prudes and will cancel your account with them the first hint of “adult content”. Try AdBrite if your posts aren’t too salacious; use BlackLabel ads if your blog gets raunchy.
      2. Affiliate links: try to set up affiliate programs with booksellers, “toy” sellers (like GoodVibrations, etc.).
      3. Selling ad space: unlikely, and probably not worth the return unless you are already a big name on the scene, in which case you are not reading this white paper!
   7. eCommerce: necessary only if you are selling your own books. Too big a subject to cover here, however a good first step is setting up a PayPal account. *(if anyone would like to pitch in on a good process here, please let me know!)*
2. Networking (not necessary to do all, but try for more than two)
   1. FaceBook
      1. NetworkedBlogs app
      2. Join pages/groups in your interest area
      3. Find lots of friends! ☺
   2. Goodreads.com (be sure to register as an “author” on the site!)
   3. LibraryThing.com
   4. Twitter.com
   5. Yahoo!Groups
   6. Tumblr.com
   7. Blogger/Blogspot
   8. MySpace
   9. LinkedIn
   10. LiveJournal and/or Dreamwidth
   11. Delicious (or, Del.icio.us)
   12. YouTube

**OTHER STUFF**

*Graphics you will need:*

1. A logo of some kind (think, “Nike swoosh”; this isn’t necessary, but it helps ease the way for creating a cohesive identity, and for making easy graphics like icons, and is critical if you cannot for any reason actually use a photo of yourself anywhere.)
2. General icon (100x100 pixels – for all memberships)
3. Large icon (300x300 pixels – for Gravitar, mostly, but doesn’t hurt to have on hand)
4. Blog header (size varies, usually rectangular)
5. Favicon (16x16 pixels – it’s the little icon you see on the address bar or tabs of your browser for a site; not really necessary but is a nice touch)
6. Headshot/promo shot of yourself (if your identity allows for revealing your face; otherwise, base all graphics on your logo)
7. Covers from your published works (you *should* be allowed to use them for promotional purposes, but always check with your publisher first for restrictions)

*The many different logins needed (minimum – the more networks you join, etc.):*

1. An identity-specific email address (hotmail, gmail, ymail, or you@yourdomain.com, etc.)
2. Wordpress.com (for networking)
3. Wordpress.org (for forum participation, and downloading plugins)
4. Gravitar.com (cross-platform icon service, very useful when commenting on others’ blogs)
5. Facebook.com
6. Twitter.com
7. Google ID (for gMail, gGroups, gDocs, gSitemaps, gAnalytics, Feedburner, etc.)
8. Yahoo ID (for Yahoo!groups, mainly)
9. Tumblr ID
10. Delicious (for sharing links)
11. Domain hosting admin login
12. WP admin login
13. Goodreads.com (for networking)
14. Blogger/Blogspot login (for networking, commenting)
15. LinkedIn.com (business networking)
16. MySpace.com (optional, depending on the demographics you are trying to connect with)
17. Big box bookstore membership (for affiliate networking – Amazon, Powells, Borders, B&N, etc.)
18. OpenID login (good for all those smaller networks you don’t want to join, but end up participating in every once in a while)
19. Bit.ly (useful for shortening URL links on FB or Twitter, etc.)
20. Akismit (for pro sites, it will cost you a nominal fee to get an API key, and is so totally worth it)
21. PayPal (if you plan on selling anything on your own)

*Things you might find useful:*

* + - 1. RSS reader – great for keeping up with the many industry/author blogs you will probably end up following. GoogleReader and FeedDemon are popular.
      2. Bookmarking account (such as Delicious or Diigo or EverNote): a way to keep track of web sites and stories you find online. If you use Delicious or Diigo, the bookmarks can be shared with your readers/followers, who can “subscribe” to your public bookmarks as a way to keep up with you.
      3. GIMP graphics software: it is free, fairly easy to use, and will let you do things like crop pictures and such forth with full control. If you want to get fancy, you can with things like filters and brushes, but either way it is good to have on hand for quickly modifying a graphic. Also has a lot of free tutorials online for doing different things with it.