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About Write to Publish

Mission Statement

Ooligan Press's annual Write to Publish conference aims to familiarize people with the publishing process and industry in a way that fosters knowledge and long lasting relationships between writers, designers, and other publishing professionals.

The goals of the conference are to:

- promote and support Ooligan Press
- take the mystery out of the publishing process (but not the magic)
- forge connections between local writers, designers, and other publishing professionals
- offer workshops for hands-on experience
- pass on techniques and information to successive years to promote the continued growth of the conference

History

Write to Publish began as a fundraiser and open house to inform the public about the publishing program at Portland State University and the nonprofit press, Ooligan, at the heart of the program. Although the conference evolves each year, past teams have hosted panels, workshops, pitch sessions, readings, and more, all of which are attended by local industry professionals and authors.

2009

Friday, May 29

Information: Join Ooligan on Friday, May 29th for a full day of education about publishing for writers and a free informational open house. Seminars will be offered on subjects including copyright, finding an agent, polishing your manuscript, self publishing, and finding a publisher.

In addition, Ooligan will be selecting twenty manuscripts for advance critique by editing students and Ooligan Press acquisitions will be hosting a pitch table. Tickets will go on sale on Monday, April 20th, 2009.

Theme: General Publishing

Panelists: N/A

Panels: N/A

2010

Saturday, May 22 & Sunday, May 23

web.archive.org/web/20110720024944/http://www.ooliganpress.pdx.edu/w2p/?page_id=54

Information: Write to Publish, affectionately known as Oolicon, is a conference organized by Ooligan Press. The primary goal of Write to Publish is to demystify the publishing process for writers. Write to Publish is different from other writing conferences in that it does not focus on the craft of writing, but rather on the process of getting published.

On May 22, Workshop Day, choose to attend workshops for writers or workshops for industry professionals. Come back on May 23, Open House Day, to mingle with professionals in the industry and to hear authors speak about their experiences with the publishing process. Ticket prices are \$130 for writers for the full conference (this includes five workshops and the Open House on the second day) or \$32 per workshop. Ticket prices are \$215 for industry professionals for the full conference.

Theme: General Publishing

Panelists: Sarah Berry, Dennis Stovall, Marty Brown, Sara Ryan, Vinnie Kinsella, Brett Warnock, Aaron Colter, Bernadette Baker-Baughman, Bo Johnson, Michael Clark, Ali McCart, Greg Netzer, Andi Zeisler, Ursula K. LeGuin, Deborah Hopkinson, Shannon Wheeler, Lilith Saintcrow, Virginia Euwer Wolff, Chuck Palahniuk

Panels:

- The State of Publishing
- Young Adult Trends and Audience
- How to Polish Your Manuscript
- Graphic Novels: Publishing and Process
- An Agent on Writer/Agent Relationships
- Writers, Conventions, and the Web
- Copyright
- How to Find a Publisher
- The Dos and Don'ts of Self-Publishing
- The Writer/Illustrator Relationship
- How to Market Using Social Media
- Converting Books to Digital Content
- Sustainable Publishing

2011

Saturday, May 21 & Sunday, May 22

web.archive.org/web/20130208203201/http://www.ooligan.pdx.edu/w2p/about/conference-archive/2011-write-to-publish/

Information: Write to Publish is unlike any writing conference you've previously attended. Instead of focusing on the craft of writing, we explore the process of getting published. The conference is split over two days. **Day One** consists of eight focused workshops for writers on

different aspects of the publishing industry. Workshops are 90 minutes long and \$35 each. Discounts are available for students and for those attending four workshops (a full day pass also gets you free entry into Day Two). A full schedule and description of workshops, and how to buy tickets, can be found [here](#). Tickets may also be purchased on the day, however advanced purchase is encouraged as there is a limited amount of space in each workshop. **Day Two** is an 'industry mingle' where published authors share anecdotal tales of their experience with the publishing industry, and vendors from all areas of the industry will have table displays and be ready to answer your questions about publishing. Day Two is not just for writers, but anyone who enjoys reading. Doors open at 10.30am. Entry is only \$10, with tickets only available at the door. For a schedule of authors speaking on Day Two, please click [here](#). Our theme for 2011 is *Open Books*: opening a book is not only an individual action, but something we can all do together. At Write to Publish, you can open your book to the possibilities in publishing such as digital publishing, niche publishing, self-publishing, and sustainable options.

Write to Publish 2011 is about empowering you as a writer, so you're one step closer to getting published. Get ready to spend two days having your questions answered and seeing how you, too, can become a published author.

Theme: Open Books

Panelists: Ruth Feldman, Sylvia Spratt, Loretta Stinson, Betsy Amster, Dennis Stovall, Gretchen Stelter, Vailey Oehlke, Amanda Gomm, Tom McCluskey, Natalie Guidry, Danielle Marshall, Michael Munk, Todd Sattersten, Patrick M McGinty, Bill Johnson, Kevin Sampsell, Gabe Barber, Sid Miller, Stephanie Lenox, Michelle McCann, Cory Freeman, Emily Whitman, Emmalisa Sparrow, Jessicah Carver, Abbey Gaterud, Ida Kubiszewski, Martha Koenig, David Biespiel, Emily Choweth, K.B. Dixon, Brian Doyle, Ariel Gore, Lisa Ohlen Harris, Donna Henderson, Henry Hughes, Tom Krattenmaker, Zachary Schomburg, Loretta Stinson, Willy Vlautin.

Panels:

- Marketing Yourself as an Author
- Publishing in the Digital Age
- The Author/Agent Dialogue
- Small Press/Niche Publishing
- Sustainability in Publishing
- Managing Your Manuscript
- YA Trends and Audiences: Author & Editor Conversation
- Benefits of Writing Workshops & Classes

2012

Saturday, April 28

web.archive.org/web/20120215101550/http://www.ooliganpress.pdx.edu/w2p

Information: Write to Publish is unlike any writing conference you've previously attended. Instead of focusing on the craft of writing, we explore the process of getting published. Throughout the day we will host twelve workshops highlighting the basics of publishing with relation to our conference theme: Step into Genre.

The author stage will host a variety of authors who will speak about their own experiences in publishing. These presentations are intended as an "industry mingle" rather than a series of readings. The authors will focus on the ups and downs, challenges, and triumphs they experienced in their careers. Local vendors from the publishing industry will also be present, sharing their knowledge and services with conference-goers.

We selected our 2012 theme—Step into Genre—with the realities of the publishing industry in mind. While the focus of many graduate writing programs is literary fiction, we recognize that much of the publishing world is focused on genre, whether it is young adult paranormal romance, hard science fiction, or serial killer mysteries. By hosting authors in a wide range of genres and offering workshops focusing on different topics related to genre, we hope to offer insight into the publishing world through a lens that is often underrepresented.

Write to Publish is about empowering you as a writer so that you are one step closer to getting published. Get ready to spend a day having your questions answered and seeing how you, too, can become a published author.

Theme: Step Into Genre

Panelists: Chelsea Cain, Todd Sattersen, Inara Scott, Vinnie Kinsella, Abbey Gaterud, Jason V. Brock, Jenna Bayley-Burke, Amanda Gomm, Tom McCluskey, Jay Lake, Colleen Houck, Lucy Softich, William F. Nolan, Phillip Margolin, Allison Moon, P.R. Frost, Virginia Euwer Wolff, Ken Scholes, Jeff Burk, James Beach, Lisa Hendrix, Amber Keyser, April Henry, Eliza Lane, Michelle McCann, Mary Darcy, Relium Media, Michael McGregor, Michael Clark, Paul Collins, Lilith Saintcrow, Suzanne Young, Cassiel Knight, Terri Reed, Jessa Slade

Panels:

- So You Want to be a Published Author?: An Overview of the Publishing Industry
- Social Media 101
- Going Digital: The Future of Publishing and E-Books
- Stepping into the Future: Transmedia Projects
- Do I Really Need an Editor?: The Author-Editor Relationship
- DIY: Self-Publishing
- Signing Your Life Away: Deciphering Contracts
- Genre-fication: Where Does Fiction End and Genre Begin?
- Where Pictures Meet Words: The Graphic Novel
- Books Two, Three, and Four: Publishing A Series

- Genre Bending: Science Fiction, Fantasy, Paranormal, and More
- Cowboy, Vamp, Or Noble Lord: Finding Your Niche in the Romance Genre
- The other Side of the Tracks: Nonfiction
- Vampires, Cancer, and Road Trips: Publishing for Young Adults

2013

Saturday, February 23

web.archive.org/web/20130123091625/http://www.ooligan.pdx.edu/w2p/

Information: Write to Publish is unlike any writing conference you've previously attended. Instead of focusing on the craft of writing, we explore the process of getting published. Throughout the day we will host twelve workshops highlighting the basics of publishing with relation to our conference theme: Write What You Know.

The author stage will host a variety of authors who will speak about their own experiences in publishing. These presentations are intended as an "industry mingle" rather than a series of readings. The authors will focus on the ups and downs, challenges, and triumphs they experienced in their careers. Local vendors from the publishing industry will also be present, sharing their knowledge and services with conference-goers.

Write to Publish is about empowering you as a writer so that you are one step closer to getting published. Get ready to spend a day having your questions answered and seeing how you, too, can become a published author.

Theme: Write What You Know

Panelists: Sean Davis, Kevin Sampsell, Kristy Athens, Vinnie Kinsella, Michael McGregor, R. Gregory Nokes, Michael Munk, Sheridan McCarthy, Joe Bianco, Kristian Williams, Kristen Hall-Geisler, Chloe Caldwell, Betsy Amster, Greg Mowery, Per Henningsgaard, Dennis Stovall, Roosevelt High School Students (Unique Ink), Susan DeFreitas, Floyd Skloot, Lidia Yuknavitch

Panels:

- Creative Nonfiction and Memoir: The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Other Considerations
- History and Biography: Forward Through the Past
- Media and Journalism: Devil in the Details
- Framing the Narrative: How Modern Memoirs Make Use of Techniques Borrowed from Fiction to Hook and Hold Their Readers
- Classroom Publishing: Discovering Your Voice
- Food and Travel Writing: Recipes for and Expedition

2014

Saturday, February 15

Information: The sixth annual Write to Publish conference will be held at Portland State University from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on February 15, 2014 at the [Native American Student Community Center](#) (NASCC). The conference aims to demystify the publishing process for writers and others interested in the industry and invites all ages of the public to explore the meaning of New Adult, listen to authors, share in their experiences, and gain information about an industry that is ever-changing.

Theme: The New Adult Revolution

Panelists: Allison Moon, Angel Punk, Aron Nels Steinke, Chris Roberson, Fiona Kenshole, Jamie S. Rich, Jemiah Jefferson, Jen Van Meter, Jen Violi, Karelia Stetz-Waters, Kelly Williams Brown, Stacey Wallace Benefiel, Emi Lenox, Becky Hawkins, Jessica Glenn, Sandra Bishop, Holly Lorincz

Panels:

- Diversity in New Adult: Expanding Our Horizons
- Transmedia: Building a World for Your Story
- Navigating Comics Publishing: Independents, "The Big Two," and Everything in Between
- Marketing New Adult: How to Reach Your Audience
- Writing and Editing Comics: Processes and Relationships
- Merit, Schmerit: Genre Fiction and the People Who Love It
- Literary Fiction: Stories Close to the Heart
- Memoir and Autobiography Comics: Your Life on the Page

2015

Saturday, January 31

web.archive.org/web/20141206023800/http://ooligan.pdx.edu/writetopublish/

Information: Come join Ooligan Press this winter at Write to Publish 2015, a publishing conference for writers, artists, and other industry professionals. Unlike many conferences, Write to Publish explores more than just the craft of writing. We have searched far and wide for a lineup of speakers who will help our attendees better understand the entire publishing process. Get ready to meet and mingle with industry professionals in an intimate setting, attend one of our six panels or three workshops, pitch your manuscript to local agents and publishers, and, most of all, get ready to have your questions answered, learn, and be empowered. Write to Publish 2015 is sure to be an exciting day, and we're thrilled to have you be a part of it.

Theme: General Publishing

Panelists: Mary Bisbee-Beek, Paul Martone, John Mutter, Liz Crain, Vinnie Kinsella, Cheri Lasota, Diane Chonette, Adam McIsaac, Mark Russell, Shannon Wheeler, Leia Weathington, Susan Kirtley, Todd Sattersten, Chip MacGregor, Tina Ricks, Lois Leveen, Karelia Stetz-Waters, Leni Zumas, Amber Keyser, Chris Morey, Patrick McDonald, Nicole McArdle, Leia Weathington, Susan DeFreitas, Sabrina Parys, Tenaya Mulvihill

Panels:

- Creating a Professional Platform
- Designed to Sell
- The Graphic Novel Narrative: Where Words Meet Illustration
- Straight Talk About Contracts & Rights
- Writing Outside the Lines: Why We Tell Uncomfortable Stories
- How to Fund Your Creative Project

Workshops:

- Editing Essentials: The Nitty Gritty to the Big Picture
- Design as a Marketing Tool
- Pitch Workshop

Pitch Round Table Participants:

- Chip MacGregor and Holly Lorincz of MacGregor Literary Agency
- Sabrina Parys and Tenaya Mulvihill of Ooligan Press
- Joe Biel of Microcosm Publishing
- Matty Byloos and Carrie Seitzinger of Small Doggies Press
- Laura Stanfill of Forest Avenue Press

Management

Write to Publish as A Teaching & Learning Space

At the beginning of each term, be sure to set the expectations for the project. Remember, Ooligan Press is a teaching press, and Write to Publish should be seen as a project through which each member can grow and learn. This means that even project managers can make mistakes, but together the team needs to agree to communicate clearly and be respectful of one another. This also means that team members should get to know each other and each of the varied talents and skills that each individual brings to the table.

PrOps Meetings and Ooligan's Publisher

PrOps stands for Project Management & Operations, and it's Ooligan's weekly management meeting. These meetings give project managers a chance to give weekly updates on their

projects directly to the publisher and to get feedback and advice from the rest of the management team.

Areas of Responsibility

Towards the end of their term, the 2015 project managers began assigning team members specific areas of the conference to oversee. For example, one team member was in charge of the pitch sessions while another was in charge of the raffle. On the day of the event, this made managing the conference much less stressful for all involved, and because each team member's roles overlapped slightly, less details fell through the cracks.

However, it is recommended that the division of areas to oversee begin earlier on in the planning process--in the spring, for instance. This way, each team member will be more invested in their work and have realistic expectations of what their assignments will look like week-to-week.

Other possible areas to assign might be social media and website management, workshops and panels, or the bookfair.

This works well with co-management, as well. When each manager has his or her own specific areas of responsibility, there is less chance of details being overlooked or lost in the general shuffle.

Using the Resources Around You

Many of Write to Publish's participants and attendees came through connections. Abbey, Per, and all the instructors in the program are great resources for possible keynotes, panelists, workshop presenters, etc. Per also hosted a training session for the W2P 2015 moderators, and Abbey gave the welcoming speech. In addition, many of the students will have connections in the publishing world, either through their personal life, business associations, or internships. Don't be afraid to put the word out and ask for help when looking for something for the conference; anything from food donations to a sponsor.

Editing and marketing departments are also great resources. Make sure anything marketing related goes through the marketing lead before being released to the public. Make sure anything written goes through the editing lead before being released to the public. Grammatical mistakes look bad for both the conference and the press, and they have happened in the past because at the time department oversight was lacking.

Conference Timeline

When planning assignments and the overall timeline of Write to Publish, think about it in two parts: spring and fall. While there's a summer in between those two terms (and even a few students at the press) the workforce will be substantially smaller and most of the conference-related work will fall on the shoulders of the project managers responsible for the

event during that period. Because of this, it's important to be organized but flexible and keep a faster pace than many of the other projects. There should never be a lull. When one task is taking longer than expected, there should always be something else to replace it--something else to get ahead on--while waiting it out.

The first part, or the spring term, will consist of a lot of planning and brainstorming and list-building (but don't reinvent the wheel, and reuse as much as possible). The second part, or the fall term, will consist of a lot of marketing and publicity. Both parts, however, will involve a high level of communication.

April

1. Sketch out a rough list of the [programming](#) schedule. Will there be a reading? How many panels will there be and will they be scheduled at the same time?
 - a. These details may change, but it is essential to have a rough idea of how the day will go so that you can ensure the space you reserve will be suitable.
 - b. **NOTE:** It is not necessary to determine the content of each workshop and panel at this point. Instead, come up with numbers. Think about how *many* panels there will be and at what *time* they will occur.
2. Find [the venue](#) for the event and [select the conference date](#).
3. [Create a budget](#) and [set pricing scheme](#).
4. Brainstorm and contact keynote speakers.
 - a. Do not use more than a week of the group's time for this, and be sure to gather a list of at least 15-20 possible speakers. Reach high, but be prepared for rejection.
 - b. Once you have a list, create a hierarchy. Who are your top choices? How will they impact the "theme" of the conference and attendance levels? How active are they on social media?
 - c. Give each individual two weeks to respond to the message. Move on if you do not hear from them by then. After a week, a follow-up message would be appropriate.
5. Brainstorm a [theme](#) and target audience(s).
6. Brainstorm [sponsors](#) and [vendors](#).
 - a. Create a hierarchy. The type of vendors and sponsors that are contacted can affect the direction of the conference.
 - b. Have members of the team draft letters to sponsors. It is recommended that the team waits on drafting letters to vendors until May. However, if the team does not intend to seek sponsors, then the task could begin now.
7. Contact potential sponsors.
 - a. Give potential sponsors two weeks to respond to the message before moving on. After a week, a follow-up message would be appropriate.
8. Create vendor page (or section) on the Write to Publish website.
 - a. The copy should advertise tables at the bookfair to vendors and should be easily added to later on, as elements of the conference start coming together.
 - b. Publicize the page on Ooligan social media outlets, industry newsletters, groups.

- i. **NOTE:** Local Portland Facebook groups, like [Women in Portland Publishing](#), are extremely useful ways to get the word out there.
9. Design [newsletter](#) template.
10. Set up the [ticket registration system](#) and a timeline for sales.

May

1. Brainstorm the “theme” of the conference’s [collateral](#).
 - a. Schedule a meeting with the marketing and design department leads at the press and create a design brief and timeline for the production of all marketing materials.
2. Select a designer and begin designing collateral.
 - a. The designer should be able to provide a few rough sketches of multiple concepts based on the design brief.
3. Brainstorm themes, guidelines, and partners for the [annual Write to Publish writing contest](#).
 - a. Have a member of the team draft a call for submissions, including the results of the brainstorming session.
4. Contact potential contest partner.
 - a. Include a draft of the call for submissions, as an example, when corresponding with the publication.
5. Brainstorm and narrow down panel and workshop topics.
6. Brainstorm speakers who best fit the set of panels and workshops being offered.
 - a. Create a hierarchy. Who are your top choices and why?

June

1. Write letters to potential speakers.
 - a. Assign team members various speakers to research and write compelling letters to, inviting them to attend the event and join a panel or workshop.
2. At this point, it would be ideal to have the keynote speaker and presenting sponsor finalized. If not, however, begin another serious push.
3. Sketch out another draft of the programming schedule, this time more refined.
 - a. This version of the draft should designate specific time slots to panels and workshops to ensure that speakers are not booked for two panels or workshops at the same time. However, it is important to note that although this draft may closely resemble the final version, it may have to change if speakers for a topic prove difficult to find.
4. Design and send first newsletter.
5. Finalize and print [postcards](#).
6. Finalize annual writing contest details and write a press release.
7. Market contest to local authors.
8. Write letters to potential vendors and begin contacting.

July

1. Contact potential speakers.
 - a. Email the first round of speakers offering an official invitation to the conference. Four speakers on each panel seems to be the sweet spot.
 - b. Give potential speakers two weeks to respond to the message before moving on. After a week, a follow-up message would be appropriate.

August

1. Continue contacting potential speakers, if necessary.
 - a. Consider reevaluating panels at this point if the team is having difficulty finding speakers willing to commit.
2. Begin gathering speaker's biographies and photos for the website.
 - a. Speakers will want control over their bios so don't waste the team's time writing them. Instead, email each speaker asking for their bio, compile them in a Google document, and have the editing team revise them for style and consistency.
 - b. Ensure photos are high-resolution.

September

1. Write press release(s) for the conference and brainstorm media contacts.
 - a. At this point, most of the programming should be finalized allowing the release to be more focused, highlighting speakers and exciting panels.
 - b. Consider making multiple versions of the press release for different demographics.
 - i. For example, one that caters to poets and one that caters to graphic novelists. Blogs, newsletters, and organizations exist for both of these audiences, but not always in the same place.
2. Send press release(s) to all relevant organizations and media.
 - a. The press release should be sent to as many relevant organizations and publications as possible, with the goal of generating discussion, sales, and media inquiries.
3. Publish speaker's bios on website.
4. Edit speaker's photos and publish on website.
 - a. Photos should be 72 ppi and 500 x 500 pixels.
 - b. For color consistency, it is also recommended that they be converted to black and white.
5. Schedule [tabling session\(s\)](#).
6. Do a second push on publicizing the annual Write to Publish writing contest.
 - a. Follow up with organizations who haven't responded to previous messages and seek out new ones.
7. Put the program schedule on the [website](#) and publicize it on [social media](#).
8. Research PSU courses relevant to the conference for [classroom visits](#).

- a. Make sure to keep track of the time of the class, the subject matter, and the professor on a spreadsheet. One used by previous teams should already be attached to the current year's Trello board.
 - b. Assign team members to various courses based on availability. The team member should email each professor and set up a time to visit the class and speak about the conference in October.
9. Put out a call for panel moderators. You can find a moderator contact template [here](#).

October

1. Host tabling session #1.
2. Conduct classroom visits.
3. Design the [conference program](#).

November

1. Design and make remaining conference [collateral](#).

December

1. Design nametags and other conference signage.
 - a. Examples of possible signage:
 - i. Notice to attendees that by attending they are agreeing to be filmed and/or photographed.
 - ii. Arrows directing attendees to different rooms (or the bathrooms).
 - iii. Signs for each vendor table in the bookfair.

January

1. Host tabling session #2.
2. Conduct a second round of classroom visits.
3. Print conference programs.
 - a. Printing the programs takes 2-4 days. It is recommended to hold off on this task for as long as possible in case there are any last-minute changes (and there more than likely will be).
4. Prepare day-of materials.
 - a. For example, stock tote bags with collateral and gather nametag supplies.
5. Host panel [moderator training session](#).
6. Follow up and check in with every vendor, speaker, volunteer, etc.
 - a. In other words, EMAIL ALL THE PEOPLE.
 - b. Volunteers should be sent a "best practices" email.
 - c. Attendees should be sent a different "best practices" email. A few things that might be included in this email are:
 - i. Where the conference is located or where to park.
 - ii. What to wear.

- iii. What to bring with you, like cash, a pen, a notebook, etc.
- iv. Last minute changes to the program.

NOTE: The important thing to realize for the week of the conference, is that the team will be extremely busy answering emails and trouble-shooting problems. It is recommended to leave as few tasks till the last week as possible, as there won't really be time to do anything but put out fires. No matter how much the team has been communicating with people, some individuals just won't pay attention till the week of the conference and won't have any idea about what's going on. On that note, make sure to check in with every single person and business who is supposed to be participating in the conference. Even if they've previously confirmed, some will need more than one reminder or potentially drop out last minute.

Volunteers

You can find the volunteer template [here](#). The 2015 managers used team members as department heads, which worked well. That way, someone familiar with the conference was always on duty in each relevant section or event. This allowed the managers some downtime, time to check in with conference attendees, and time to troubleshoot issues. The team also had 2-3 floaters during each period: the floaters were not really necessary. Instead, redistribute the volunteers and have a big set-up and teardown staff.

Most volunteers do not need training, but those working the registration table should be trained beforehand on how to process attendees signing in, how to keep proper track of sales, how to process cash payments, and how to use the credit card system.

Registration Table(s)

It is advised to have a separate table, or possibly two tables, set aside for Write to Publish staff. Registration will probably take up one table alone. The other table may be used for raffle, auction, nametags, surveys, or other administrative needs.

Ooligan Table

The PAs should be expected to staff the Ooligan table for at least part of the day, but check in with the publisher and the PAs to make sure. Try to place the Ooligan table with the other vendors, but in an advantageous spot. One of the reasons Ooligan hosts the conference is to spotlight the publishing house, so keep this in mind for the vendor section as well. For Write to Publish 2015, both the Ooligan Table and the registration table had to share the same cash box. While not impossible, it was certainly frustrating to have to pass the cash box back and forth, and this made record keeping a little more problematic. It might not be possible to have multiple cash boxes, but it's definitely worth looking into.

The 2015 team also had a few complaints about the credit card system not working the day of the conference. Unfortunately, this was out of the team's control. It might not be possible to do anything beforehand to prevent this, but it may be worth researching what caused the problem.

Despite everyone's best intentions, the 2015 team still had difficulty keeping accurate day-of sales info and had to estimate. Make sure there is a system for keeping track of everything that needs to be sold, and that everyone is trained on that system.

Programming

Theme

In previous years, Write to Publish has operated under various themes. While this worked out well sometimes, the theme often proved too narrow for attendees. In 2015, the project managers got rid of the theme concept. Instead, they focused on the conference's mission, to demystify the publishing process, and on making the conference a more practical, business focused venture.

The team added more workshops, a pitch session, and included panels with more practical topics, such as contracts and rights or funding a creative project. These changes proved to be very popular, which makes sense--if people are going to spend \$100 on something, then they want to feel like they are getting something measurable from it. One of the main guiding factors to programming should be value. What is the conference offering to attendees in return for that support?

Instead of thinking in terms of a theme, it is more helpful to think in terms of target audiences. Who is supposed to be purchasing a ticket to Write to Publish? One thing to keep in mind is that writers will always going to be the primary audience of the conference. However, there is room in the Write to Publish programming schedule to have a secondary audience in mind. For the 2015 conference, the team targeted artists. While graphic novel panels will always have attendees, artists have yet to take a large interest in the conference. There are many subsets of writing that would work well as a secondary audience: nonfiction, poetry, or screenwriting, for example. Remember, though, this is only a secondary audience. The primary audience should always be writers in general and focus on the practical.

The keynote speaker will also affect the overall theme of the conference, because different speakers will pull different attendees, and therefore should partially shape the conference. The presenting sponsor(s), too, might influence programming decisions.

Keynote Speaker

When choosing a keynote speaker, be sure to keep a few things in mind:

- Does the speaker have name recognition?

- Recognition brings in attendees. The keynote address generally takes place at the end of the day and having a big name will ensure that attendees stay to hear him or her speak.
- Is the speaker engaging?
 - People who have been in the industry for a while are not always very optimistic.
- How will this speaker shape the theme of the conference?
 - In other words, the types of panels and subjects he or she could speak on.
- Will the team be offering an honorarium?
 - This could affect the caliber of speaker obtained and the distance the speaker is willing to travel.

In 2015, the team was given a direct connection to John Mutter, the co-founder and editor-in-chief of Shelf Awareness. This connection was given to the team through the help of a local book publicist, Mary Bisbee-Beek, after the team had tried and failed several times to lock down a speaker. Although the industry newsletter has thousands of followers, the target audience is aimed more at booksellers than readers. Some attendees felt that Mutter was too dry and business-oriented. Perhaps someone new to the game, like Pubslush, would have provided a more energetic voice.

Portland has several local, big names that have participated in Write to Publish before, including Ursula K. Le Guin and Chuck Palahniuk. However, not everyone at the press is encouraging of approaching names like these repeatedly, so it may be better and more worthwhile to save these speakers for time-sensitive themes in which not doing so would simply be impossible.

The important thing is to network and use resources at hand. Jean Auel is the author of the *Clan of the Cave Bear* series, and Oregon's best selling author. She lives locally and speaks in PSU's writing classes from time to time, one of those classes being Craig Lesley (or Martin C. Lesley in PSU's directory). Auel in particular has done a lot of research for her books, so book research might be a great panel topic for her.

[Kent Watson](#), who teaches the bookselling course in the program and runs Pubwest, would be another great resource for finding potential panelists. He has a lot of connections, and Pubwest is pretty much a bigger version of Write to Publish, so he can more than likely offer great advice or put the team in contact with the right people.

Bookfair

Vendors

[Ticket sales](#) are always going to be the biggest source of money for Write to Publish. That being said, don't discount vendor table sales for bringing in a good chunk of revenue. In 2015, the team decided to sell both half and full vendor tables, and it worked well. Several vendors did not want to pay the full price, so opted for a half table instead. And because the half tables were

priced at \$60 and full tables at \$100, two half tables actually brought in more money than one full table--making it a win-win.

In 2015, the team also sold out of bookfair space. Moving the food and beverages to SMSU 294 would offer more bookfair space. Either way, it is recommended to have an extra table on hand in case one is needed for a panel or a vendor gets forgotten (both of which can and have happened). Also, keep in mind that Ooligan needs its own table separate from the registration table, and registration may require two tables, depending on how many attendees will be present and what types of collateral are being distributed (like tote bags, for example).

Many conferences do not seek out vendors, but simply have a form online for people to sign up. Write to Publish should and can take a variety of approaches. However, it is recommended to begin with a form--and minimum social marketing--about table sales. In the summer, once the keynote speaker and other details have been finalized, team members can start directly contacting vendors.

It is important to remember that vendors can also affect the "theme" of the conference and to balance the organizations in attendance accordingly. The bookfair should not contain only publishers and only publishing services, but literary journals, bookstores, artists, literary nonprofits, and more. Step outside the box, and ensure that attendees will have a bookfair that is equally diverse as they are. Also, remember your target audience. If you are trying to entice more non-fiction writers, then having superhero comic book vendors might not be the best fit.

Raffle

Of course, the first thing needed to run a raffle are the prizes. Local businesses are the place to start.

The 2015 team got donations from [Broadway Books](#), [Annie Bloom's](#), [Endpaper Publishing Services](#), [Hotel DeLuxe](#), [Palace Cakes](#), Mary Bisbee-Beek, and a french gift basket from the mother of a project manager. If anyone in the project team has connections with local businesses, that's a great way to get donations. If not, start looking around town for businesses that might be interested. It is recommended to get a variety of raffle items so that people have a lot to choose from. Some book-related and publishing-related items are important, but other items like the dessert or hotel stay are fun things that excite people and get them to buy more tickets.

Accepting Donations

Once a business has agreed to donate an item, the item should be sent to the Ooligan Press office. Try and secure donations early on so that they arrive in time for the conference.

Day Of The Conference

There are a few different ways the raffle can be ran. It will depend on the schedule for the day, and what the project managers deems best. In 2015, it was decided that there were to be several drawings throughout the day. The person in charge of the raffle would draw from two fishbowls about every hour after lunch. This ended up having its advantages as well as disadvantages. It was good because it spread the drawings throughout the day, saving a chunk of time from having to be dedicated to it at the end of the event--when people will be tired and ready to head home. On the other hand, having to announce every hour, when people are networking, can be disruptive. Again, it really just depends on the schedule and how the panels and workshops etc. are planned out.

Raffle Winners

There are also a few options for handling the winners of the raffle. You can choose to have only people who are present at the time of the drawing be allowed to win. This makes it so that people have to stay for the entire day to be able to win, which is good for the conference attendance. On the other hand, it limits the freedom of the attendees to come and go as they see fit. In 2015, it was decided to have everyone write their name and phone number on the raffle ticket, so if they decided to leave the team had their information. If someone didn't come up and claim their prize they were texted to let them know they won. They had the option to return for their item, or if they could not return, their item was sent to them. If the item is bigger, such as a gift basket, it may be best to have them come back another day to pick it up at the Ooligan office and avoid shipping costs.

Silent Auction

Alternatively, a silent auction, or a combination of a raffle and silent auction, might be considered. Write to Publish 2015 generated a little more than \$100 from raffle ticket sales, and some prizes were worth two to three times that amount. In a silent auction, a sheet is posted for each prize and whoever wants to can bid on the prize, basically naming what he or she would want to pay for it. For higher valued items, this might be a better option; however, keep in mind that people are already paying \$100 for entrance, and might not want to make a significant bid, even on an expensive prize.

Panels & Workshops

Panels and workshops make up the bulk of the conference. They are, if you will, the eye candy, filled with speakers who attendees respect and admire--or who they (hopefully) will by the end of the day. As mentioned earlier, panels, especially, will affect the ["theme" and audience](#) of the conference. It's very important to research speakers, what they stand for--to even go as far as digging up videos of previous speaking engagements. Each speaker should bring something to the table and, if you're lucky, complement each other.

When planning workshops, think about what kind of things authors, designers, novice writers, and publishing professionals would like to have hands-on experience in. Remember to pick workshops that are different enough to generate interest in a variety of fields. Pick leaders who are knowledgeable in their field and are comfortable with speaking in front of a crowd.

The 2015 conference generated a lot of positive feedback, the workshops were one of the main reasons why people attended. There was some negative feedback, though; a few attendees thought the workshops weren't long enough and the pitch workshop didn't go over what to specifically expect at the pitch. Moving forward, take these comments into consideration.

There is an Excel spreadsheet with [workshop ideas](#). For the 2016 conference and beyond, it would be best to have four workshops that are one hour each.

Best Practices:

- Use networking; Ooligan Press has a wide network to generate speakers, vendors, and donors.
- Panels should have no more than four speakers.
- Workshops should have no more than two speakers.
- Contact the possible workshop leaders over the summer or fall; have backups.
- Don't use the same room for workshops as the panels.
- Set up the workshops next to one another on the program or next to a panel you think will be dull.
- Ask the workshop leaders in advance if they want the rooms set up a certain way.
- Create Five-Minute and End signs to hold up for the leaders.
- Send out an email to the workshop leaders the week before the conference reminding them when/where the conference will be located and how long each workshop will be.

Other Thoughts:

- If similar workshops crop up, have the workshops go over different aspects.
 - For an editing workshop, go over specific editing skills instead of broad strokes.
 - For a pitch workshop, go over what to specifically expect during a pitch.
- Have a bigger room for the workshops or set up more chairs in advance.
- Have mini workshops.
 - A miniature writing workshop during lunch could be interesting; something for attendees to do if not interested in the Pitch Roundtable or Reading.

Reading

There are a few things to keep in mind when planning the reading showcase.

- When asking authors to participate in the showcase, three is the magic number but do not have more than four authors reading. Ooligan authors who have recently been published or are weeks away from being published are the best choice (gives us a chance to promote the press in a different way). Contact authors at least four to five

months before the scheduled conference date so they do not have conflicting appointments.

- If there is going to be a pitch session, schedule the reading at the same time so the attendees not pitching can attend the reading.
- Do not assign the reading to a panel room but a public place so that attendees and well as guests checking out the bookfair can attend. It would be great to create interest in the press and Ooligan authors through the reading.
- Make sure to add a description of the reading to the panel description section of the website.
- Create a press release for the reading showcase that can be sent out via email to various businesses, public institutions, and classes.
- Advertise the showcase and the authors participating on social media.

Pitch Roundtable

Who to Recruit?

Who gets recruited to be part of the Pitch Roundtable is largely a matter of your group's networking abilities and what presses/agents are already planning to attend (either as panelists or as part of the bookfair). Do not simply go out and recruit as many local presses as possible--try to keep in mind the theme of the event and to recruit people that you think the attendees will want to talk to. While presses/agents such as Forest Avenue and Chip MacGregor were great for 2015, both because they have a fairly broad range of genres they work with and because they understood that this was an opportunity for some attendees to practice, incredibly niche-y presses do not work well. For example, Microcosm is a great local Portland press, but their area of interest and expertise is incredibly narrow, so fewer attendees will be interested in pitching to them.

Scheduling

With 2015 being the pilot for the Pitch Roundtable, we used the following schedule:

- 45 minutes long (roughly)
- 6 time slots, each 7 minutes long
- 5 minutes for pitching, 2 minutes of downtime
- 10 total people to pitch to

However, these times slots were too short, especially for attendees who had never pitched before and weren't used to being succinct. With the only five minutes, many attendees didn't get a chance to get feedback on their ideas or on their pitch. Additionally, after sending out only two waves of invites to registered attendees, some of the presses were already full; more slots are needed, depending on the overall number of attendees. Keep in mind that conference attendees will want to pitch to multiple people.

To that end, for 2016, it would be worth it to explore the following changes to the format of the Pitch Roundtable:

- 1 hour long
- 6 time slots, each 10 minutes long
- 8 minutes for pitching, 2 minutes of downtime
- More people to pitch to
- Limiting the number of times each attendee can pitch

These changes will allow more attendees to participate and give attendees slightly longer face time with the presses and agents--including enough time for them to receive feedback, both on their idea and on their pitch itself. Limiting the number of times each attendee can pitch may be necessary depending on how much interest attendees are showing in the Pitch Roundtable and how many presses/agents are available to pitch to.

Emailing Participants

Once the list of people/presses available to pitch to has been finalized and a schedule created, registered attendees will need to be contacted. They should be given information about the Pitch Roundtable (how it works and who will be there) as well as the opportunity to sign up for time slots. Sending out a weekly email worked well--for 2015 the emails went out on Wednesday afternoons, because Wednesdays were the day the list of registrants was updated. Simply inform new registrants what the Pitch Roundtable is, what slots are still available, and any restrictions (such as the number of slots they are allowed to sign up for). Repeat these emails weekly until all slots are filled.

Additionally, a few days before the event itself, a final email should go out to everyone signed up to pitch. This email should contain a list of what they should bring (writing utensils, query letter, etc) and a list of best practices for pitching.

Changes from 2015

Having successfully managed the 2015 Pitch Roundtable, the following are a few things to keep in mind for 2016:

- Use a bell to indicate when time slots are starting and ending (yelling ended up being slightly awkward)
- Have large versions of the schedule posted at the front desk during the morning rush as well as outside the room to prevent a large volume of people coming up and asking to see your copy of the schedule.

Meet & Greet

For Write to Publish 2015, the conference ended with an unofficial meet & greet at Rogue Hall. While fun, out of the seventy attendees only about eight showed up; one panelist attended the social, and from Ooligan Press only the Write to Publish staff came to the after conference

event. Conference participants are busy people, and might not have the availability to stay after the conference. It is also important to consider that vendors and attendees will have been at the conference all day, and many will just want to go home. While none of this means that the event does not have potential, they are certainly factors to consider—in how large of a space to book, and in how the event is marketed. If an after conference social event continues to be included as part of the conference, what might be ways to encourage more people to go?

It is not recommended to hold the event at Rogue Hall. While they did not have a minimum sales amount and allowed individual tabs, they also did not communicate with the W2P management team well, never followed up about our experience with them, and were horribly rude the next day when the W2P staff tried to meet there and talk about the event.

Select the Conference Date

Write to Publish has had an [array of event dates](#). Most recently, the conference has been held during the winter term, in January or February. Previous years hosted the event in spring.

The reasoning behind moving the conference to the winter was largely due to the rumor that a popular Portland writer's conference, Wordstock, was planning to move their own date to the spring. With that kind of competition, the Write to Publish team decided it would be best to move the conference to a date that did not conflict with Wordstock.

While outside events should not dictate the timing of the conference, they should inform the decision. Be realistic about how many conferences local writers attend each year and how often they do so.

Do not settle on a date until it is confirmed that the venue space is available during that time. Make sure to have a few options in case your first choice doesn't work out.

The Venue

Write to Publish has been held in two places: the Smith Memorial Student Union and the Native American Student Community Center (NASCC). While both places have their own benefits, it is highly recommended that Write to Publish continues to be held at the Smith Memorial Student Union.

In 2015, the team decided to transition back to hosting the event at the Smith Memorial Student Union and were nearly able to cut costs for the venue space in half. In addition, the NASCC proposes more logistical limitations and poor acoustics.

Conference Staff

The [Conferences & Events](#) staff can be extremely helpful if the Write to Publish team makes sure to check in regularly and communicate expectations clearly.

The downfall of the Conferences & Events staff is that there is a high amount of turnover, which is probably to be expected in a university department that employs students. Make sure to write down what organization the event is listed under in their system. Previous years, lacking this information led to long waits as a member of their team attempted to find the conference reservation. Also be sure to have a member of their team write down all logistical requirements, so there is documentation of everything.

Set-Up

The Conferences & Events staff should be able to help with the basic set-up of the event if it continues to be held in the SMSU, including moving furniture, providing tables, and putting out any AV related items (see below). However, in previous years, the set-up of the event has led to a few problems:

- The popular panels were too crowded.
- The green room was too large.
- The seating in the SMSU mezzanine was not functional.
- The rearranging of furniture between panels was chaotic.

There are a few proposed ways to fix these issues:

- Increase the number of panels happening at one time to hopefully split more people off (e.g., have three panels at once instead of two)
- Use a larger room, such as 238, for the speeches and the panels expected to be more popular.
 - Of course, it's impossible to predict 100% which panels will be popular.
- Use a smaller room, such as 262, as the green room.
- Try using one of the rooms, such as 294, to put the square lounge tables in, creating a food/beverage area. Or, if food is not being offered, maybe use the room as the pitch room so a midday reset is not needed.
- Try to limit shuffling around of furniture. Using a big room instead of opening and closing 296, 298 would help with this. The Pitch Session will still present a problem as it will still require a reset unless it has its own room.

Audio Visual

AV equipment, such as a podium or microphones, are not provided by Conferences & Events. AV for events is not handled through PSU's general AV department, either, but rather through a specific AV department for conferences and other events.

In past years, the AV staff has specified that microphones are unnecessary for smaller rooms, but based on the feedback from attendees, it is recommended that each panel or workshop have some form of amplified sound. Not every speaker attending the conference will be excellent at speaking slowly or projecting their voice.

Ticket Registration

The 2014 and 2015 team used the Destiny online registration system available to PSU departments via the cashier's office. There are pros and cons to using this system. The pro--and a pretty big pro--is that it's free. The con is that it can be a little confusing to navigate. You have to rely on other people to activate it, which can be a slow process. Currently, only Ooligan's publisher can run reports through the system.

However, it's still worthwhile to use. Give yourself a lot of time to get the system setup. It can be set to activate on a certain date, so as soon as you know what your pricing scheme will be (see below). It is recommended to do this sooner rather than later. Every year, there have been setbacks.

NOTE: If the team plans on running the annual writing contest during the summer, the registration fee can also be set up on this system.

Jonathan Aispuro, manager for non-credit solutions at the cashier's office, administrates Destiny for PSU. His email address is jaispuro@pdx.edu. He has previously mentioned the possibility of graduate students gaining access to Destiny through Banweb, so this may be worth looking into if future project managers are able. Being able to quickly access reports is particularly useful in the weeks before the conference (and waiting, quite frankly, is a bit inconvenient and nerve wracking!).

Another Destiny-related item worth looking into is the ability to set up an autoresponder to anyone who registers for the conference. With an autoresponder, the team could immediately tell the attendees:

- Thank you
- Any information about pitch session sign-up

Set Pricing Scheme

The 2015 team charged the following rates for admission to the conference:

- \$80 early-bird discount
- \$100 adult
- \$35 workshop or keynote
- \$35 college student
- \$20 high school student

If there will be a discount offered to people who purchase tickets in advance, be sure to consider this when creating the timeline. Publicize the discount pricing early and often. Not enough people at the 2015 conference took advantage of the lowered pricing, and advance sales offer a better expectation of day-of attendance. The 2015 discount ran for three months.

Most writing and publishing conferences charge \$300-\$400. If the team gets a really kick-ass keynote speaker and increases the number of workshops/panels available, it would be fair to raise the price of adult tickets to the conference further--to \$150, for example.

Also be sure to consider the unit cost of day-of giveaways (like [tote bags](#), for example) when setting up ticket prices and how [sponsors](#) can help offset overall expenses.

It is worth noting that W2P 2015 did not sell any workshop/keynote tickets, though past W2P conferences have. The necessity of including this ticket option may be evaluated in future years. While it does not cost the conference anything to offer a workshop ticket option, it may be a logistical problem for management, and certainly confused some 2015 attendees while they were registering.

Badges & Tickets

The Write to Publish 2015 management team decided badges, as opposed to tickets, would be the easiest way to keep track of entrance. Using badges allowed attendees to come and go as they pleased and the bookfair to be open to the public. Also, when using SMSU, there are multiple entrances to both the building and the conference area, so a ticket or registration system that did not allow for an easy visual identification throughout the conference would have proved problematic. By using the badges, the team was able to staff one volunteer at each panel to confirm the badges as people entered.

Lanyards were donated by PSU Campus Recreation and PSU's marketing department, if more lanyards are needed, it is recommended to check first. Label kits for the name badges were purchased both online and at Office Depot. Do not underestimate how many badges to buy. W2P 2015 ran out of badges while printing them the night before, so had to finish printing them the morning of the conference. This was very stressful, and made set-up more chaotic. Some badges were not printed. Even after purchasing another pack, the conference staff still ran out. Things to consider: badges are not just being printed for attendees, but for staff, participants, and vendors. There will most likely be day-of ticket sales. With the current registration system and how reports are run, an up-to-date registration report might not be available when printing badges. Make sure to give a lot of leeway.

For workshops, since the admission was for single-use, W2P 2015 used tickets, which could be accepted at the door and torn. As no workshop tickets were sold, these were not actually used.

Create a Budget

A former student, Lauren Lamson, set up the 2015 Write to Publish budget spreadsheet, and it worked amazingly well. If possible, it is recommended to continue using [this document](#).

It's important to create a budget prior to or at the same time that you are brainstorming speakers because the budget will impact whether you are able to offer an honorarium, as well as coverage for other expenses like travel and lodging.

When setting up the budget, make sure to set minimum, expected, and ideal goals--basically a P&L for the the conference. The ideal goal gives you something to shoot for and the minimum keeps you from overspending. For minimum numbers, it is suggested that the team uses the numbers from the previous year, depending on the results of the survey. At the 2015 conference, attendees were happy and specified they would more than likely return, for instance. A standard business practice is to set sales goals at 10% more than the previous year. This is a good benchmark for expected numbers. For ideal numbers, really shoot for the moon. You just might get it.

Since teams prior to 2015 did not tend to keep records of their expenses (at least not ones that survived), the conference has mainly operated its budget on assumptions. The 2015 team, however, was very thorough with their own budget and their expenses can be used to model expected costs. Some of the proceeds from the 2015 conference should be set aside for the 2016 conference, and may be taken into consideration when planning certain expenses, such as fees for keynote speaker or for workshop presenters.

Presenting Sponsor(s)

Initially, Write to Publish 2015 planned on having one presenting sponsor and several other, lesser, sponsors. Pubslush, luckily, fell in the team's lap. The book funding organization emailed the team asking how they could get involved in the conference, and the project managers replied with information on how Pubslush could become a sponsor.

At that time, the project only had two team members, who had to focus their energy elsewhere. Therefore, they were unable to pursue additional sponsors. There is, however, definitely a potential for sponsors to be sought out again, and more sponsors could serve as another source of income for the event.

Grants

Grants are a tricky and labor intensive process. All grants go through a PSU administrator who applies for them, and the administrator only chooses one group on campus to apply for any one grant. It's kind of a lottery. While Write to Publish probably qualifies for grants, this may or may not be worth the effort.

Food Donations

Some Questions to Ask Before Starting

- Do you want to have food available at the conference?
- If so, do you want to have breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner?
 - W2P 2015 provided an open breakfast (for volunteers and attendees) and a lunch in the green room for guests.
- What kind of drinks will you provide?
 - Bottled water and coffee are highly recommended as a lack of drinks could be a pain point for attendees.
- Who do you want to provide food for? Attendees? Guests? Volunteers? All of the above?
- Does anyone in the group work at a restaurant? Does anyone in the group know anyone who owns a restaurant? Has anyone in the group ever gotten a donation from a restaurant before?
 - Networking was how W2P 2015 managed to get donations for food items, so the importance of using connections cannot be understated.
- What sorts of condiments and utensils will you need for the food and drink that is being provided?
 - Forks, knives, spoons, napkins (never underestimate how many you need, they can be used for the next event), sugar, Splenda, milk/half and half/creamers, stir sticks (spoons can be used to stir), coffee cups, drinking cups, etc.

Best Practices

- Use the [Donated Item Form](#) to give donating organizations a receipt.
- Make sure, as much in advance as possible, that you have a group member or volunteer who can pick up food donations.
- Make sure you have plenty of early morning volunteers to help get the food prepared and set out.
 - From the experience of W2P 2015, people arrive early so it is best to have the food ready in advance.
- Make sure you have someone free in the schedule who can pick up more coffee (the first batch goes pretty quickly) and who can pick up the lunch donation.
- Use networking.
 - Most of the donations W2P 2015 received were given because someone in the group was friendly with/a customer of/worked with a business in the past.
- Coupons are a great way to “give” lunch to non-VIPs or to otherwise lower the cost of putting on the conference.
- Make a map of places to eat near the event to accompany any coupons or meal passes that you may hand out.
- Have a variety of foods.

- W2P 2015 could have probably had more fruit and vegetable options for breakfast to accompany the bagels and donuts.
- Voodoo donated a LOT of doughnuts; if they donate to W2P again, be prepared to cut them into smaller portions and have places to store the spare buckets (yes, they come in buckets).
- Drinks
 - Bottled water is really affordable at Costco.
 - Coffee throughout the day is suggested.
 - W2P 2015 had apple and orange juices available at breakfast.

W2P 2015 Food Donors (Contact Info on [Contact Master List](#))

- Anna Bananas
- Voodoo Doughnut
- Sesame Donuts
- Cafe Yumm (on PSU Campus)

Marketing & Publicity

Marketing Plan

Just as in book production, a marketing plan is a useful tool. You can find the event marketing plan template [here](#). For ease of use, it is more practical to link to spreadsheets outside the plan than it is to try and include all information in the plan. However, the project managers should consider less time consuming ways of creating a marketing plan too, like a list on [Trello](#) with specific marketing tasks and due dates.

Style Sheet

A tool to consider using for the conference would be a style sheet. Some communications with the 2015 team at the beginning of the planning went out with a name spelled wrong. Bookfair was spelled two ways in marketing materials: book fair and bookfair. A style sheet would be a great place for the hashtag. Having an official style sheet for students to use would help eliminate inconsistencies like this.

Collateral

Consider the panels and workshops being offered and what previous year's have done when designing the conference's collateral.

Write to Publish Programs

In past years, the program has been designed as a brochure. This was found to work best when designed with four panels on a 8 x 14 size sheet of paper. If no member on the team has a flair for design, speak to the design lead about assigning a floater this task.

Also consider design elements that expand upon the physical limitations of a brochure, like a QR code that links back to the website.

The 2015 team printed out 100 programs and ran out of them halfway through the day. While the conference only had 70 attendees, many vendors and panelists wanted a brochure as well. Although the [2015 program](#) had a few mistakes, it serves as an example for future teams to build on.

T-Shirts

T-shirts generally don't sell. For the 2015 conference, the team decided against having more printed since there were a fair amount on hand (and still are). While it is good to have a small stock of t-shirts available for volunteers and staff to purchase, do not be over-optimistic about their sales.

At least a couple molotov squid t-shirts, created as *Forgive Me* collateral, were sold at the 2015 conference, and perhaps, if the shirts were marketed better, more could have sold. This type of collateral, the kind that the Write to Publish team doesn't have to create themselves, is in fact probably more lucrative for the press than pushing more of the Write to Publish t-shirts anyhow.

Postcards

Postcards are easier for students to carry with them and can easily be passed out during [classroom visits and tabling sessions](#). The 2015 team initially printed 200 postcards and ran out by the end of the fall term. The team then printed out another 100 postcards that didn't get used up. However, during the summer, the team had quickly made "interim flyers" while they waited for the official ones to be designed and produced. These numbers are unaccounted for, so 300 postcards seems like a good number to shoot for.

The 2015 team listed on each postcard that anyone who brought it to the conference with them would receive a complimentary raffle ticket. Several of our attendees brought the postcards with them. The gesture helped generate excitement and cost nothing. It also provided a way to track effectiveness of the postcards. Unfortunately, the complimentary raffle ticket idea came up late, and many flyers were handed out before this tracking measure was implemented. While the method may vary, it is recommended to provide some sort of incentive for returning the postcard to the conference, and to include the incentive from the beginning, so as to track the effectiveness of postcards versus other methods of marketing.

Click here to see the 2015 team's [postcard](#).

Posters

The results of the 2015 survey demonstrated that posters don't lead to many sales, at least not directly. However, the team only spent \$25 on posters, so even if they netted only one ticket at \$100, printing posters was still worth it.

Targeting poster locations works better, especially at bookstores like Powell's, but all posters should definitely not be put up until after tickets go on sale. The 2015 team printed 25 posters, which ended up being a pretty good sweet spot. There were even a couple left over.

Previous teams have put together lists of poster locations, so there's no need to do anything but update said list. An important location is the display cases on the first floor of SMSU. Make a reservation through SALP. Be specific when talking to them, as they've been known to steer people wrong.

Click here to see the 2015 team's [poster](#).

Tote Bags

The 2015 team decided to give each attendee a totebag, and everyone seemed to agree it was a nice touch. People who seemed to walk away without one came back to the registration table asking for one.

They worked well for a few reasons. They gave the team a place to put marketing materials, such as flyers for Ooligan's books. And actual books, older titles which the publisher allowed the team to give away. The team also put bags of M&Ms inside the bags. Each piece of candy had a Write to Publish logo printed on it. They were inexpensive and an adorable touch. Most of the items put in the bag were simply sitting around in storage or taking up space in the Ooligan workroom, so why not use it? More importantly, the bag itself is a marketing tool, and in a city like Portland, where everyone could use another reusable bag, you can be sure it'll be put to use.

The bags can be purchased from [Paper Mart](#), although it's always a good idea to compare prices. The 2015 team ordered 100. Expect the bags to arrive in roughly two weeks, if not sooner.

NOTE: The image needs to be 300 dpi and in certain formats, like eps.

Write to Publish Buttons

Traditionally, Write to Publish buttons simply feature the logo. However, themed buttons may be appropriate if they are general enough to be reused for other events.

A 1" pin-back button is recommended, and supplies can be purchased from the [Button Makers](#). As of 2015, button makers are available to loan through the PSU library and to use at the IPRC. Make sure to ask other Ooligan students, as well, as many have design hobbies outside of the press and may be able to provide one.

NOTE: For all cost-related questions, please refer to the previous year's budget under the "Expenses" sheet.

Click [here](#) to see the 2015 team's official Write to Publish [buttons](#) (which should and can be reused, if needed).

Advertising

The 2015 team did not pay to advertise anywhere, and they did not (and still don't) believe that future teams need to either. The advertising that really gets attendees is not the paid kind. If the team does decide to pay to advertise, be careful about the audience the advertisement is being directed to.

Previous years have sold advertisements in the Write to Publish program, although the 2014 and 2015 team did not. Without records of advertisement sales, it is difficult to determine whether or not these sales proved to be successful, but they may be worth looking into.

Classroom Visits & Tabling Sessions

Classroom visits and tabling sessions are a great way to make direct connections with potential attendees and hand out postcards directing traffic back to the website. Because these both are held on campus, they mainly help target college students, or, in the case of tabling sessions, people walking through campus.

Classroom Visits

Each member of the team, including project managers if possible, should participate in classroom visits. Team members should sign up to visit as many courses as they are able to and bring a small stack of postcards with them to hand out to interested individuals.

The 2015 team created a script for classroom visits that can be used as a template for future teams, for those who feel uncomfortable preparing something on their own. The script should be attached to the team's Trello board. Classroom visits are the perfect time to bring up the writing contest to students who might not have heard of it already. Combined with an email blast to the listserv, students may just hear about it enough to remember to submit their work.

Tabling Session

To set up tabling session, contact the current English department Graduate Coordinator. Scheduling two tabling sessions, one during fall term and one during winter, is the most effective way of using tabling to market the conference. The amount of times a table should be hosted might be worth looking in to. If tickets go on sale earlier in the fall, then adding a third tabling session at the beginning of the fall term might be worthwhile.

The best location to table will be in the breezeway between Neuberger Hall and Smith Memorial Student Union. Since the publisher of Ooligan Press will be amenable to members of the Write to Publish team tabling during exec meetings, Mondays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. is the perfect time. Also, there will be more students on campus passing in the breezeway during that period of time on Mondays.

Also consider that outside organizations sometimes host tables at PSU, and therefore Write to Publish might be able to host a table at another school, such as PNCA, for example. This may be worth looking in to.

Email

Some professors at PSU prefer to forward emails than to have visitors. Keep this in mind as an option when approaching professors about classroom visits. Due to time constraints, visiting all classes might not even be feasible. For other universities, especially ones not close by, visiting at all might not be feasible, while a well-worded email might get passed on. This also works well for libraries and librarians, who are known to be great advocates from programs they support.

Newsletter

Past years have tried to work with the graduate assistants, who are in charge of the program's newsletter, to publicize the conference. This has generally proved to be extremely frustrating. Each year, the student running the newsletter changes, and on their list of priorities, the newsletter isn't very high.

It is recommended that future teams start up a Write to Publish newsletter that is hosted separately from Ooligan's existing one. This way, the Write to Publish team can control the content that goes into the newsletter, how often it gets sent out, and who it gets sent to. The 2015 Write to Publish website did have a newsletter sign-up section, so there is already a list of people signed up.

A few ways to increase the Write to Publish mailing list would be to:

- Have the Ooligan newsletter send an opt-in campaign, where those who already receive the newsletter for Ooligan can choose to also receive the conference's.
- Send an announcement about the newsletter through the Willamette Writers (or try).

- Offer an incentive on the webpage to sign up (like a complimentary raffle ticket).
- Clearly indicate why signing up for the newsletter is a great idea (special offers, first pick of pitch agents, giveaways, etc.)
- Cross-promote. See if Willamette Writers will promote the W2P newsletter in return for promoting theirs. Friends of the Library also has a big list and have supported the conference in the past.

A lot of people consider newsletters and email to be hands down the most effective marketing tool. Don't overlook this.

Website

The 2015 team set up the [website](#) with the intention of making it usable for future years. It took a great deal of time, uses Ooligan's design and color scheme, and it is not recommended that future teams change too much of the overall website from year to year. Instead, update the content and publish pages as the conference develops.

Social Media

Ooligan's social media was the number one [surveyed result](#) for how attendees learned about the conference. The more the management team can stay on top of social media, especially after ticket sales are opened, the better ticket sales will be. The easiest way to do this is to assign social media subjects at the beginning of each term to the team to schedule throughout the term.

Remember a few things when scheduling posts:

- Make sure it's relevant to the conference.
- Make sure it advertises the conference.
- Make sure to include links.
- Make sure to include hashtags.

Hashtag

The 2015 conference had an official hashtag: #W2P15. Despite this, that year's management team received complaints about not having a hashtag. Make sure to set the hashtag early and include it on all marketing material. Something to consider: a tweet or hashtag contest might be a great way to promote the conference.

Writing Contest

Traditionally, Write to Publish hosts an annual contest of some form, and generally, this contest involves writing. The 2015 team tried to do something new by hosting separate contests for designers and high school students. As it turns out, the conference is better off with one,

focused contest marketed to writers. Having multiple contests made handling submissions difficult and made marketing cost more time than the contests were worth.

Despite these challenges, the 2015 writing contest was actually quite successful. The project team decided to charge writers who submitted a \$10 entry fee and in return offered a \$100 cash prize and the opportunity to read at the conference. The hope was that at least ten individuals would submit their work, paying for the prize, and in the end, exactly ten individuals did. The team also partnered with a local literary journal, Gertrude Press, to publish the winning story. This worked well because Gertrude offered publicity support too. For the sake of variation, it may be beneficial to change the contest partner each year, if possible. It's also highly important that the journal be respected and publish work that Ooligan supports.

Previous years have offered other incentives for writers to submit their work, like creating a unique poster, featuring their piece, that can be sold or given out at the event.