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Writerly Wit with Deina Furth

Episode 2: How Authors Can Manage Social Media

Hi, everyone, and welcome to the second episode of the Writerly Wit podcast, with your host—I'm Deina Furth.

Last time, we talked about getting started with writing when you've never written before, and I mentioned in that episode that I have a bunch of tips for you when it comes to handling your social media.

Now, I should let you know before I begin which social media networks I'm actually on. If you don't use any of these, you might not find this episode particularly helpful, so I want to give you a little breakdown first.

I use: Twitter, Facebook, Google Plus, YouTube, Goodreads, and I blog. You can count the podcast as social media too, I suppose, but I'm still far too new to it to offer any good insight. So maybe after a few more episodes I'll have some knowledge to share with you.

I'm mostly going to focus on Twitter, Facebook, and Google Plus for this episode. I will, however, provide a few tips for Goodreads and YouTube, and I'll break down a few of my favorite plug-ins for blogging that might help make your life a bit easier.

Twitter

Okay, so first I'm going to tackle Twitter.

Twitter is one of my absolute favorite social media networks to use as an author.

The community is so friendly and so helpful. I've met a lot of great people through Twitter, and you get plenty of support from your followers. It's generally a pretty open social media platform, but Twitter is fast-paced. You need to tweet several times a day at least if you want to be heard through the noise.

And many authors get stumped when it comes to their overseas audiences—how can they tweet at three am to reach that segment of their readership?

I have a few things that will help you. I'm going to break them down by cost.

Scheduling Tweets

So here's the deal: If you want to be active on Twitter even when you're off at your full-time job, sleeping in on the weekends, or are on holiday, then you're going to want to start scheduling tweets.

The good news is that there are applications out there that will allow you to do this for free. The functionality tends to be somewhat limited with the free packages, but that's okay. I think for many people, it's a good enough start anyway.

So first up, my savior:

BufferApp: Free with the basic package.

The starting package is 100% free. You can queue up to 10 tweets. You can also connect your Facebook, Google Plus, and LinkedIn accounts! You then can queue up to 10 updates at once for each of these profiles.

BufferApp also has daily suggested content. I use it. All the time. I love it because it's curated, hand-picked for its quality, and it's easy to add hashtags or change things around if you want.

It also has an easy-to-use drag-and-drop interface so you can quickly shuffle around updates if you need to. You can requeue old updates with a single click or delete them if you no longer want them.

It automatically pulls images from updates where applicable—so if you're scheduling a blog post to go out in the morning, it'll just use your featured image that you used on the blog, unless you upload a different one.

Finally, BufferApp's schedule is *highly* customizable. If you see an update you like while browsing the internet, you can queue it up and it'll automatically slide into the last spot on your schedule, you can schedule it for a specific time, or you can just go ahead and send it right away. It's so versatile and allows you to schedule things days ahead of time!

SocialOomph: \$17.97 every two weeks for the professional package. \$6.97 every two weeks for the advanced Twitter package.

Okay, so I used SocialOomph for about two months. I really liked how much control it gave me—I could compose updates that would requeue if needed or be tossed away

after one tweet if I wanted.

One aspect I really liked was that SocialOomph would find good candidates for you to follow based on interests and keywords. You could also tell it to NOT show you any profiles with certain keywords in their bios. Which is really good if, for example, you're a children's author and you don't want to follow any erotica writers. That was really great—it did give me some good suggestions.

You can also purge your Dms from the SocialOomph dashboard, which is great. Twitter sucks at that. You can't just purge your Dms—you literally have to go through one by one and delete them—and it's really annoying. I hate it. But using a tool like SocialOomph, you can do it with the click of a button and enjoy a shiny new inbox. And it's beautiful.

But here's why I stopped using it: The interface was annoying and I ended up having some issues with it not actually DELETING scheduled tweets; it would just delete the tweet in the queue and then requeue it all over again in a new spot.

Anyway, without going into lengthy detail, I'll just say that SocialOomph has all the capabilities that you could want with a scheduler: You can bulk upload tweets from a spreadsheet, you can schedule them using code so that the program will choose one of 2 variations of the same tweet, which is a pretty advanced feature, and I don't think a lot of people really use it. But if you know how, it's really helpful, and you can create different profiles and keep tweets completely separate between the profiles. You can track clicks and import blog posts to send out using an RSS feed.

However, the interface is not intuitive. It is not easy to navigate. And I think that's where I ended up with some problems—it seemed like things were fixed but they really weren't.

It's a good price to pay, middle-of-the-road. And SocialOomph also supports a ton of other social media platforms, so if you're all over the place, you might want to check it out. I'd say its learning curve is a bit higher, though, and it just felt like I spent a lot of time doing damage control.

Edgar: \$50 to start.

I just started using Edgar, and it's pretty new, so I don't have a lot of information on it right now, but I'll tell you what it has so far. He is an adorable little octopus with a flare for the quirky. When you get emails from Edgar, it's like his best friend is talking to you about how awesome he is. But Edgar is also highly organized, and it shows: He is essentially like having your own personal assistant.

At first, I was hesitant to try Edgar because of his hefty price tag—I don't make much money, and \$50 a month sounded steep for scheduling out some tweets and Facebook posts.

BUT.

Edgar automatically recycles tweets if you want him to—that is, let's say you want a promotional tweet for your book to go out every Friday at noon. Well, Edgar can do that.

Let's say you want to have fifteen categories of tweets—promotions, questions to ask your audience, quizzes, pictures, inspiration, etc. Edgar has basically unlimited categories in which you can place these specific updates.

Edgar can also just tweet once if you'd prefer that, and then throws away the tweet.

You can create complex schedules, syncing data from other sites like Tweriod to create the best schedule based on the timing of your interactions. You can upload tweets in bulk or shuffle them around easily. You can attach images, of course, and you can even schedule tweets to appear on multiple accounts.

Oh, and you can do the same for Facebook. And LinkedIn. Wow.

So as you can see, the more you have in your queues the better. Edgar isn't worth it for someone who tweets once every two weeks.

But for someone with a lot of content to promote, paying \$50/month is like paying roughly \$1.70 a day for a personal assistant to stick to a schedule and keep everything organized for you.

Ummm. Yeah, when you think about it like that, it's pretty amazing.

Finding people to follow and unfollowing people.

As any Twitter veteran knows, there comes a time when you reach a threshold for people to follow: You can only follow 2000 accounts before your follower amount has to approach that same number. If a person is following 2000 people, they have to have at least, I believe, 1600 followers before they can start following more people, and that ratio continues until you surpass 2000 followers.

So an important part of using Twitter is unfollowing people.

It sucks, kinda. I mean, if you're following someone, especially if they already follow you, you might feel bad unfollowing them.

But many people stop using Twitter, leaving their accounts inactive for months. Others get hacked and never get their accounts back. Still others might unfollow YOU before you unfollow them. Or, you might have followed someone a long time ago who never followed you back.

You have to get rid of some of these accounts so that you can make enough room to follow helpful, high-quality accounts that will actually engage with you. And if you're below that 2000 follower threshold, getting rid of those accounts that aren't reciprocating makes it so that eventually, as more of the people you follow follow you back, you can break through it.

So I suggest regularly pruning your list of followers and adding different people to follow frequently. To do this, there are two tools I highly recommend:

Tweepi and ManageFlitter.

Now, if you want to pay \$15 a month, just go with Tweepi. It'll do everything you need it to do for that price tag, minus analytics.

If you want all of this plus analytics, you can pay \$49 a month to have access to all that through ManageFlitter.

But if you don't want to pay anything at all, if you're on a budget, just use Tweepi to find people to follow, and ManageFlitter to get rid of some accounts you no longer want to follow.

Now here's how they work:

When using the free version of Tweepi, you can find people to follow by taking a peek at Twitter lists and choosing people on the list to follow; you can find someone you admire and follow their followers; or you can follow people that a specific tweet follows.

You can unfollow people who are not following you back.

You can also use Tweepi to find people who follow you, but who you're not following

back.

If you pay for Tweepi, you can then search by bio, hashtags, keywords, and more, and it's very versatile.

With ManageFlitter, you can unfollow people who don't follow you back, who don't speak your language, who have eggs as profile pictures, or who haven't tweeted in over a month. The great thing about the way ManageFlitter has this set up is that it puts the tweets you have followed in chronological order. That way, if you're going through people who don't follow you back, you can see who you followed a long time ago, and who you might have followed just a few days ago.

Obviously, when it comes to removing people who don't follow you back, those you followed a long time ago should be removed before those you followed just a few days ago!

I haven't used the paid version of ManageFlitter, but feel free to browse their website if you're interested in what the paid packages have to offer.

Facebook

Okay, so I've already talked a bit about BufferApp. **Honestly, I think BufferApp is good enough for Facebook, since you can schedule well ahead of time and you get basic analytics for free.**

Most other analytics you can get through Facebook anyway, by going to your insights tab. You can see the popularity of your posts, how many people are clicking, how many people see them, like them, share them, etc. And all of that is available right through the Facebook interface. So I'm not too concerned about finding Facebook analytics through any third-party program.

Edgar is also fantastic for Facebook and so is SocialOomph. Both of these apps allow you to post to groups as well as your author pages, which is really great, because then you can schedule updates to automatically go out to your groups!

Google Plus

It's strange, but Google Plus isn't supported by NEARLY as many applications as Facebook and Twitter are.

BufferApp supports it, though, complete with suggested posts and basic analytics.

You can also use HootSuite to schedule updates for Google Plus. Now, if you're using the free version of HootSuite, you can only set up 3 social accounts. Buffer already does this, and that's why I suggested Buffer first.

But let's say you also have an Instagram and Tumblr, or something else you'd like to work with that isn't supported by Buffer. Well, you can set those up using HootSuite, because it supports a wide range of social media platforms.

I don't really like the interface on Hootsuite though, and I much prefer to use BufferApp because of its simplicity.

GoodReads

When it comes to Goodreads, there aren't any "scheduling" apps.

But if there's one thing I think every author should take advantage of, that's the blog RSS feed. That way, whenever someone comes to your author page on Goodreads, all of your most recent info will be automatically pulled to the page. You won't have to do a thing.

If you have any videos, you should add those to your Goodreads profile, too. The more media and interaction you can provide, the better your reader's experience will be.

It's worth it to note that BufferApp, HootSuite, and Edgar all support RSS connections. This way you can automatically pull blog updates in to be scheduled, just like you can on Goodreads.

YouTube

YouTube has gotten a lot better about integrating analytics right into their own dashboard, giving you all the data you need to be able to see how your videos are performing.

It used to be that you needed to do all your editing before you uploaded the video. Not so anymore. You can now add music from the YouTube library and even do basic editing through YouTube before you upload a video.

When it comes to scheduling updates, you can also do this right from the video upload dashboard. I'm including a link at the end of the transcript in case you'd like to

check it out, and I'll also include links to everything else I've mentioned.

If you don't want to schedule anything at all, no big deal. Unless you're a really prolific YouTuber, you probably won't be bulk uploading, anyway! This feature is just really nice if you do, say, a holiday-themed post, or if you're going to be away from your computer for a while—like on vacation or if you need to take a break for health reasons—and you still want to update while you're gone.

And that brings me to the end of my admittedly long-winded spiel.

If some of the stuff I said today doesn't really make any sense, don't worry. You can read through the transcript, which will be available on my site, and I'll include links to all of the applications I discussed. You can look through them and decide for yourself which ones will be of use to you!

Before I go, I'm going to leave you with a quote:

"The best way to predict the future is to create it."

That is attributed to Peter Drucker, an Austrian-born American management consultant. He's been described as the founder of modern management, but I think that when applying this to your author platform, it holds true—build it and market it. **You're creating your own future when you do this for yourself.**

Next time we'll talk more in-depth about building your author platform. I know that I've already talked about social media, but I think that there still might be some useful tips in there that I just couldn't fit all into one episode. So I hope you join me next time!

In the meantime, you can email me with questions or comments at deina.furth@gmail.com.

Be sure to visit my site, <http://deinafurth.com/>, and check the **Short Story and Flash Fiction Society** at <http://www.shortstoryflashfictionsociety.com/> and see what Mary Papas and I have put up there. If you're in need of some ideas to get started writing, we've definitely got plenty of prompts and ideas for you there!

So until next time, this is Deina Furth with Writerly Wit, and I'll see you soon!

Applications mentioned in the podcast:

Tweepi: [Follow/Unfollow for free; get access to advanced following tools for \$14.99/month] <http://tweepi.com/>

Tweriod: [Free! Find the best times to schedule tweets] <http://www.tweriod.com/>

ManageFlitter [Free unfollow tool; paid analytics + more for \$49/month] <https://manageflitter.com/>

Hootsuite: [Free scheduling and basic analytics for 3 social media accounts; get in-depth analytics, greater queue size, and up to 50 social profiles for \$9.99/month] <https://hootsuite.com/>

BufferApp: [Schedule updates and get basic analytics for free; get more in-depth statistics and a greater queue size when you purchase The Awesome Plan for \$10 a month or \$102/year] <https://bufferapp.com/>

SocialOomph: [Use the basic scheduler, DM purge, and analytics for free; upgrade to Twitter Unlimited for \$6.97 every two weeks and receive more Twitter options only; upgrade to Professional for \$17.97 every two weeks and get loads of scheduling options, analytics, social media accounts, and even schedule group updates for Facebook] <https://www.socialoomph.com/>

Edgar: [\$49/month for the individual plan that includes unlimited categories, queues, and analytics for Twitter, Facebook and Facebook groups, and LinkedIn] <https://app.meetedgar.com/>

Guide for scheduling YouTube updates:

<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/1270709?hl=en>