



# Submitting Short Manuscripts for Publication



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# Expectations

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- What types of markets exist
- How to find them
- How much you can expect to be paid
- How to choose a market for your work
- Submission Etiquette
- How to Track Your Submissions
- Success and Failure
- Q&A

# My Assumptions:

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- You want to be read by a wide audience
- You want to be paid for your work
- You've written the best story that you can
- You want to make some money with your writing
- What else?

# Submitting Can be Frightening!

- Putting your work before editors the first time can be daunting
  - ▣ You're opening yourself up to criticism
  - ▣ You'll feel like you're being judged
- It's True: you will be rejected!
  - ▣ More later on rejection, keep in mind that...

# Submitting Can be Exciting!

- Persistence pays off

JA Konrath says, “There's a word for a writer who never gives up...published.”

- You'll never be published if you don't first submit.

# Markets:



What Kind of  
Markets  
Exist?

# Markets: Traditional Print

- Traditional Print Magazines
  - ▣ Can be published annually, quarterly or monthly
    - Glimmertrain
    - Asimov's Science Fiction
  - ▣ Limited amounts of the magazine can be pub'd online
    - Abandoned Towers Magazine
  - ▣ Pay may be less (or none) for stories published online instead of in the print version

# Markets: Web 'Zines and Anthologies

## □ Electronic Magazines

- ▣ Content published on line, free to the public
  - Strange Horizons
  - The Pedestal Magazine
- Orson Scott Card's Intergalactic Medicine Show

# Markets: Web 'Zines and Anthologies

- Anthologies
  - Collections of stories centered around a theme
  - Can be print only, electronic only or both
    - Black Dragon, White Dragon
    - Triangulation: Dark Glass

# Markets: Podcasts

## □ Podcasts

### ▣ The “modern version” of “books on tape”

- Well Told Tales

- Pseudopod (Horror Fiction)

- Podcastle (Fantasy)

- PodioBooks.com - DIY

- You do all the work of creating the podcast

- You get paid 75% of any *donations* made

# Markets: Contests & Non-Traditional

- Contests
  - ▣ Glimmertrain Press
  - ▣ Writers of the Future
- Non-Traditional Markets
  - ▣ Coffee Can and Cereal Boxes
  - ▣ Twitter “Flash” Fiction

# Markets:



Where Can I  
Find These Markets  
for My Fiction?

# Finding Markets: Books & Magazines

## □ Books:

### ▣ Writer's Market

- Contains a “complete” listing of markets available
  - Fiction and non-fiction/short and long
- Also contains listings of agents, editors and agencies

## □ Magazines

### ▣ Writer's Digest

### ▣ The Writer Magazine

# Finding Markets: Online Opportunities

## □ Online Listings

### ▣ Writer's Market on Line

- As with the book, a complete set of market listings
- Includes agent, editor and publisher information
- Fee for service with varying payment levels

# Finding Markets: Online Opportunities

## ▣ The Writer Magazine

- Another fee for service market list (free with subscription to the magazine)
- Database offers browse and search capabilities
- Some search engine flaws
  - Example: Search “fantasy”
    - Returns “Bread for God's Children Magazine”
    - Guidelines specify “no fantasy”

# Finding Markets: Online Opportunities

- Writer's Digest

- Doesn't have a market listing
- Occasionally publishes in-depth articles on market
  - 24 Agents Who Want Your Work
  - Hot Markets: The Top 100 markets for Magazine and Book Writers

# Finding Markets: Online Opportunities

## □ Dedicated Market Lists Online

### ▣ Duotrope's Digest

- Over 2,800 Fiction and Poetry Markets
- Free!
- Searchable database + added value information

### ▣ Christian Writer's Market Online

- Complete market list, including foreign, markets & other resources
- Pay for service

# Finding Markets: Online Opportunities

- ▣ The Market List (SpecFic)
  - Free!
  - Browseable by category
  - Contains articles, interviews, classified, reviews, and links

# Finding Markets: Online Opportunities

- ▣ Ralan's Webstravaganza (Spec-Fic and Humor)
  - Free!
  - Most popular on the web for speculative fiction
  - Not database driven
  - Mailing List for market changes available

# Finding Markets: Online Opportunities

- ▣ Doug Smith's Foreign Market List - (Specfic Markets)
  - Free and annotated!
- ▣ Kevin Anderson's Audio Market List
  - Audio markets
  - Contains literary, mainstream and genre podcast markets

# Finding Markets: Other Opportunities

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- Word of mouth/recommendations
- Maryland Writer's Association (and other) mailing lists or bulletin boards
- Your critique group members
- Industry Blogs

# Pay Rates



How Much  
Can I  
Expect to Earn?

# Pay Rates

- Pay rates for short fiction vary per market:
  - ▣ Professional – as defined by SFWA = 5 cents or more per word
    - Cricket Magazine – 25 cents per word
    - Boys Life – 25 cents per word
    - Fantasy OnLine – 10 cents per word
    - Chizine – 7 cents per word
    - Note: these pay rates are significantly less than non-fiction

# Pay Rates

- ▣ Semi-Professional

- 3 – 5 cents per word

- ▣ Token

- One-quarter cent to 2.99 cents per word, or
- A flat rate of \$5-10
- Copies of the magazine

# Pay Rates

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- ▣ “For the Love”
  - Less than \$5 flat rate
  - Exposure only

# Now What?



I've Done My  
Research:  
Now What?

# Choosing a Market

- A story will have better success if it's pitched to the right market
  - ▣ Don't send a romance to Ellery Queen
  - ▣ Don't send a mystery to Asimov's Science Fiction
  - ▣ Hint: Read the Market's Guidelines

# Choosing a Market

- Aim for the top markets, and work down
  - ▣ Often, getting published is a matter of serendipity: you sent the right story, to the right editor, at the right time
  - ▣ Don't second-guess yourself: your story may be just what the editor is looking for
  - ▣ Let the editor say “no” to you, not the other way around

# Choosing a Market

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- What's the cost to you for aiming high?
  - No more or less than submitting to a non-pro market, especially now when so many magazines accept emailed submissions

# Choosing a Market

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- What's the cost to you for aiming low?
  - Missed opportunities
  - Spend more money than you earn

# Creating A Marketing Plan



What Do I Need to  
Consider When Making  
A Marketing Plan?

# Market Plan

- A market plan is a detailed list of the top 3 to 5 markets (or more) your story fits
  - “Top Markets” are based on your criteria
  - If your story is rejected, you’ll already have the next market ready to go
  - Saves time in the long run
  - Frees your mind to keep on writing

# Market Plan: Considerations

- There are some things you must consider when making your marketing plan:
  - ▣ Story length
  - ▣ Genre
- Almost every other criterion is up for grabs:
  - ▣ Pay rate
  - ▣ Length of Response Time
  - ▣ Prestige of Market

# Market Plan: Examples!

- One way to determine where a story should go first is to create a matrix:
  - Example:
    - ▣ 7,300 word story
    - ▣ Takes place during the Vietnam War
    - ▣ The main character is a Navy SEAL (who also happens to be a Selkie)

# Market Plan: Examples!

# Days Rank	# Days	Magazine	Pay Rate	Pay Rank	Final Rank
	113	Pedestal Magazine			
	90	Writers of the Future Contest			
	3	Fantasy & Science Fiction			
	57	Polluto Magazine			
	125	Zoetrope All Story			

# Market Plan: Examples!

# Days Rank	# Days	Magazine	Pay Rate	Pay Rank	Final Rank
4	113	Pedestal Magazine			
3	90	Writers of the Future Contest			
1	3	Fantasy & Science Fiction			
2	57	Polluto Magazine			
5	125	Zoetrope All Story			

# Market Plan: Examples!

# Days Rank	# Days	Magazine	Pay Rate	Pay Rank	Final Rank
4	113	Pedestal Magazine	.08/word	2	
3	90	Writers of the Future Contest	\$750 - 5,000	1	
1	3	Fantasy & Science Fiction	.07/word	3	
2	57	Polluto Magazine	"Pays Occasionally up to Prof."	5	
5	125	Zoetrope All Story	.05/word	4	

# Market Plan: Examples!

# Days Rank	# Days	Magazine	Pay Rate	Pay Rank	Final Rank
4	113	Pedestal Magazine	.08/word	2	6
3	90	Writers of the Future Contest	\$750 - 5,000	1	4
1	3	Fantasy & Science Fiction	.07/word	3	4
2	57	Polluto Magazine	"Pays Occasionally up to Prof."	5	7
5	125	Zoetrope All Story	.05/word	4	9

# Market Plan: Examples!

- Sometimes the obvious choice is a prestigious market
  - ▣ For the exposure (obviously)
  - ▣ Some sales lead to larger contracts: Writers of the Future
  - ▣ Can make you stand out in a crowded field
  - ▣ Prestigious semi-professional sales impress editors:
    - Cemetery Dance
  - ▣ Other sales “put you in good company”
    - Eppie (now Epic) Award Winners

# Side Note on Market Research

- “New to You” markets pop up when you’re least expecting them
  - Often, knowing what an editor is looking for gets your imagination going
    - You may find yourself juiced with an idea to write something just by scanning the markets
    - San Marino and the Dragon
      - Jay Lake, Campbell Award Winner: When writing for an anthology, write close to the theme, but don't nail it

# Finally! The Submission Process



## Submission Etiquette

# Submission Etiquette

- ▣ Be professional
- ▣ Read the market's Submission Guidelines
  - Strange Horizons
- ▣ Follow proper manuscript guidelines
  - LCRW - “Must send forever stamp to be considered”
- ▣ Read and re-read for typos and spelling errors before you send off your submission

# Submission Etiquette



- ▣ William Shunn says:
  - The cardinal rule of manuscript formatting...is to do everything in your power to avoid annoying the editor, who is a cantankerous person anyway, thanks to all the poorly formatted manuscripts that cross his desk.

# Submission Etiquette



# Submission Etiquette

- Simultaneous Submissions (simsub)
  - ▣ submitting the same piece of work to two markets at the same time
    - Some markets accept them, others do not
    - Mostly: not
  - ▣ Two schools of thought:
    - Don't ever do it: literary circles are too small
    - Life's too short: what's the chance you'll get caught?

# Submission Etiquette

- Multiple submissions
  - ▣ Sending more than one story to a market at the same time
    - Generally frowned on in fiction markets
    - Encouraged in poetry markets
    - Read the guidelines

# Submission Etiquette



- Researched your market?
- Created a marketing plan?
- Read the submission guidelines?
- Formatted everything properly?

# Submission Etiquette



Mail it out!

# Yay! I've submitted...



## Now What?

# Now What?

- Wait.
- While you're waiting, right your next story.
- What if you've been waiting... *forever*?
  - It's okay to follow up with an editor, but:
    - Check guidelines to see how
    - Consult The Black Hole or Duotrope (or your market plan) to see if you've been waiting too long
    - Wait 30 days past typical, then query

# Track Your Manuscripts

- Primary reason for tracking manuscripts:
  - ▣ So you don't send a story to markets you've already sent them to
    - Once an editor rejects a manuscript, he never wants to see it again

# Track Your Manuscripts

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- Methods of Tracking
  - ▣ File Card
  - ▣ Software
  - ▣ Spreadsheet

# Track Your Manuscripts

- File Card Method
  - ▣ Each story you write gets its own file card
  - ▣ On front of card write:
    - Market, Date Sent, Date Returned, Notes
  - ▣ Keep all cards filed in a box for handy reference
    - Pros: quick and easy, computer doesn't need to be on
    - Cons: Only see one submission at a time, difficult to produce a list of all works on the market at one time

# Track Your Manuscripts

- SONAR Sub Tracking
  - ▣ Created by author Simon Haynes
  - ▣ Install and fill in the blanks
    - Pros: quick and easy, has built-in “reports”
    - Cons: unable to create a report of every submission ever made (except in alpha-order export)





# Success!



The Editor  
Wants My Story!

# Success!



- You're not done yet

- ▣ Revisions

- Simple: style issues (grey vs. gray)

- Some publications will make these type of changes without asking you

- Complex: editor may request changes in key points of your story or plot

# Success!

- Your chances of publication rise exponentially the more agreeable you are to changes
  - ▣ Forget balking on style issues
  - ▣ You may be able to make an editor see your POV on specific changes: pick your battles wisely
- Tackle changes quickly and efficiently
- Working well with an editor may get you on a “call list”

# Success!

- Sticking to your guns and not making *any* changes could result in non-publication
  - It could also get you black-balled from the publication (at least until a new editor comes along)
  - Editors talk: it could get you black-balled from other publications, too

# Rejection



My Story  
Was Rejected.  
:(

# Rejection

- Realize that there are many reasons for rejection:
  - ▣ The editor was looking for something specific
  - ▣ Your story didn't meet the editor's criteria
    - (and beyond the guidelines, you don't even know what those criteria were!)
  - ▣ Perhaps the editor recently accepted a similar story for publication

# Rejection

- ▣ Perhaps the editor has too many “same genre” stories
  - For example: Fantasy and Science fiction is chock full of fantasy, but not enough science fiction submissions this month
- ▣ Don't take rejection personally:
  - The editor's not rejecting you – he doesn't even know you!
  - It happens to everyone

# Rejection



- Sometimes, editors get it wrong!
  - Carrie by Steven King: rejected 30 times
  - A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle – rejected 26 times
  - Jonathan Livingston Seagull by Richard Bach – rejected 18 times
  - Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance by Robert Pirsig – rejected 121 times!

# Rejection – Silver Lining

- Sometimes your rejection will come with comments
  - ▣ Not often
  - ▣ If it does come with comments, evaluate them against your vision of the story, and decide if you want to rewrite

# Rejection – Silver Lining

- Persistence pays off:
  - Continuing to send a story out should eventually result in publication (provided my assumptions are met)
  - No statistics on fiction, but non-fiction statistics state that rejected items will be published within 2 years if:
    - The author continues to send it out, and,
    - Heeds any commentary received

# Rejection – Next Steps

- Form rejection?
  - ▣ Send it to the next market on your market list immediately
- Received comments?
  - ▣ Evaluate for legitimacy, then
    - Re-write immediately and send out, or
    - Just send it out!

# Rejection – Next Steps

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- Keep writing!

# The End



Questions?