

Blogging Your Way into a Career in Books: *thelitedit.com*

By Bethan Lawrence

An active member of the Society of Publishers for five years until 2010 Lucy Pearson was desperate to find a publishing job. She felt trapped working in Beauty PR, but starting her blog *The Lit Edit* opened up new opportunities that the internships for publicity departments never had. Lucy took on her first post-blog role as social media editor for the Bailey's Women's Prize for Fiction. After two years, she moved to Australia, there "the book industry isn't as prominent a part of Australian culture as it is in London" - a handicap that only made her more determined to work on her blog, with 11.4K followers on Instagram, at the time of writing, and being awarded Book Blogger of the Year Award this year, Lucy is finally making a career out of her passion for books.

How did the idea for the blog start?

The idea for my blog started many years ago, shortly after graduating from university, where I had studied for a degree in English Literature and Language. Despite a rather rigid reading schedule throughout my degree, it did nothing but further my love for books, and soon after my finals I borrowed a copy of *Rebecca* by Daphne Du Maurier from my local library. I'd never read anything of hers before, and absolutely adored *Rebecca*; so much so that when I saw the sticker on the front saying it was part of the BBC Top 100, I decided to read my way through the list. I started my blog soon after, as a way of documenting the books I was reading from the list, and what I thought about them.

Fashion, lifestyle and beauty blogs have become an emerging and growing trend. Why do you think that it's important that a space is made for literature?

For me, books really are my main passion in life; and my love for reading has been a long standing thread in my life since I was a little girl. I think there should be a space online for all hobbies – whether travel, books or food – and book blogs are a wonderful platform through which to connect with other readers, to discover new books and authors, and to encourage others to read more widely.



Do you think that expanding literature onto social media platforms makes it more accessible for the millennial and younger generation?

Oh absolutely. You only have to look at the rise of Bookstagrammers to see the effect social media can have on what people are reading. There are lots of incredible accounts with hugely engaged followings who undoubtedly have a big impact on what their audience is reading. There too are some books, such as Rupi Kaur's *Milk and Honey*, which generate a huge buzz on Instagram and definitely brought poetry to a more mainstream and millennial audience.

I love the section of your blog 'Beautiful Bookstores'. What was the inspiration behind this?

I'm a big advocate of independent bookstores, and in the same way as I love getting behind a book I love, I see it as my duty to champion bookshops when I can. I get sent more free books than I can count, but I always buy books from independent bookshops, and think it's essential that anyone with a vested interest in bookshops buy independently rather than online.

Has blogging helped you get into publishing and advance in the publishing world? And how can it help others?

I was hired as social media editor for the Women's Prize for Fiction with zero publishing experience behind me (I had worked in both beauty and lifestyle PR at this point) but my blog was evidence of both my love for books, and my command of social media. Anyone can write on their CV that they're an avid reader; but a blog will be evidence of that; and it will also show potential employers your writing style, your creativity and a work ethic that exists outside the office.

Do you find there are a lot of benefits of having a side hustle?

There are definite downsides to a side hustle – it can be a time consuming and lonely journey at times, but the benefits far outweigh the drawbacks. Not only did my blog land my job working for the Women's Prize for Fiction and one of my biggest idols – Kate Mosse – it too has been the basis for a handful of friendships with fellow bloggers, given me the opportunity to upskill beyond what I ever learnt in an office, and ultimately allowed me to make my blog the foundation of a freelance career doing what I love.

What advice would you give to those starting out in the publishing industry?

Network and read would be the two main tips I'd give anyone wanting to get into publishing. If you're not based in London or are more of an introvert, Twitter is ideal for networking, and allows you to connect with like-minded people as well as a plethora of industry types. And of course, read wherever, whatever and whenever you can. Finally, don't be scared to ask others for help, advice, or an introduction to someone you'd like to meet. The publishing industry is a hugely friendly one, bound by its love for literature.

Do you have any new projects coming up?

I've got an upcoming project with Byron Bay Writer's Festival – a hugely popular literary festival in Australia, where I'll be creating content on my blog throughout the three-day festival, and I've got some fabulous guests lined up for my *Desert Island Books* series. Watch this space for more updates!

