

# The Dynamic Landscape of Marketing Children’s Books: Publishers Find Consistent Success Through a Combination of Online and Traditional Marketing to Adults and Children

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**Abstract** There are a number of challenges unique to the children’s book sector faced by publishers in today’s digitally-dominant business market, making it more crucial than ever for children’s book marketers to create multifaceted marketing plans that include differing but complementary approaches. Among the common marketing challenges specific to children’s books are overabundance of content, competition, access to the library market, the digital versus print dichotomy, difficulty of marketing directly to young readers on the Internet, and the dual (child and adult) target audience. While some marketing tactics must effectively attract the attention of the child reader, it is of fundamental importance (with some exceptions) for publishers, authors, and marketers of children’s books to also ensure their marketing techniques target the adult gatekeepers who are likely to purchase those books. Depending upon various factors, including age range of the reader and subject matter, marketers of children’s books are most successful when applying a mix of traditional and digital marketing techniques.

**Keywords** Children’s books · Online marketing · Traditional marketing · Library market · Gatekeeper

## Introduction

In today’s digitally-driven business market, online marketing is essential for publishers to successfully promote books, and children’s books are no exception. Publishers and authors—whether large, midsize, independent, or self-published—have found

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steady success in marketing children's books online. The need for online marketing has presented a unique challenge to children's publishers and authors: how to promote books to children successfully online. Because internet safety is a concern for many parents, and children are often limited in the amount of internet use they're allowed, marketing campaigns for children's books (both print and digital) are most successful when they target both the adult consumer and the child. Additionally, because of the gaps between age and reading levels, marketing books for children ages zero to eighteen requires many approaches. In order to remain successful, publishers must find new and innovative ways to market children's books to the parents and other gatekeepers who will ultimately buy them, and simultaneously to the children who will want to read them. Although the advantages of digital marketing cannot be overlooked, the successful marketing of children's books is best ensured when approached through a combination of both online and traditional marketing techniques.

## Current Climate of Children's Book Marketing

### Overview

According to a 2014 *Writer's Digest* article by guest columnist Lara Perkins, a literary agent who represents children's books, the children's book market has seen an increase in demand in recent years for "character-driven stories that have series potential" and that "capture a universally relatable 'kid experience' in a funny, larger-than-life way."<sup>1</sup> Perkins also stated that those in the children's publishing industry have been seeing consistent success with authors and publishers who create books that take familiar stories or themes and add a new twist or spin. She offers this advice to picture book authors on writing salable books:

Every picture book needs a plot and story structure. Even young picture books...concept books, and picture books with cumulative structures like Oliver Jeffers' *Stuck*...must have tension, rising and falling action, and a satisfying final resolution.

Any story for young readers must tap into a universal childhood experience, no matter how wacky the premise. With *Dragons Love Tacos*, for example, hosting taco parties for dragons may not be a universal experience of childhood, but avoiding certain foods and attending parties where shenanigans ensue are. Similarly, John Rocco's *Blackout* transforms a commonplace neighborhood blackout into something magical and resonant. This universality is key to winning the hearts of parents, librarians and teachers—the gatekeepers who will share your book with kids.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Perkins [16].

<sup>2</sup> Perkins [16].

Perkins goes on to remind authors that favorite picture books are read over and over again by children and their parents, so the core components she mentions—strong plots, compelling characters, and universality—are essential. And, though children’s authors must come up with new ways of telling familiar stories in order to be successful, the other challenge they regularly face is that of creating books that will remain timeless, whether they’re read a month later or a decade later.

As noted by Perkins, the universality of children’s book themes is key to winning over parents and other gatekeepers who will obtain and share a given book with the child reader. Targeting these gatekeepers, then, is a critical component of all successful marketing plans for children’s books (mostly for the zero to twelve age range, as children at the YA reading level are more likely to make their own decisions about which books they want to read). This means that promotions for children’s book titles must appeal to “two distinct groups”: kids and the adult purchasers.<sup>3</sup> To this point, says self-published children’s author Tiffany Papageorge, “you must market to both the child who will be at the library picking out his or her book and the adult who will ultimately be the one to buy the book for the child. Marketing an adult book is not nearly as complicated.”<sup>4</sup>

Authors often face this challenge, which is unique to children’s publishing, by using the central theme of their books as a platform to reach parents and other gatekeepers. For example, a picture book that deals with themes of bullying or being a student in a new school could be promoted directly to parents’ groups or schools, with opportunities for the author to join the dialogue and offer input. The widespread use of social media and online forums today has given authors the opportunity to do this either in person at schools and other places where they can get directly involved with parents and teachers, or online.

Another key component to marketing picture books and other children’s books within the zero to twelve age range is growing a fan base and utilizing fan endorsements: “Enthusiastic parents and their kids become near evangelists for the characters they love. Tapping these resources can begin in the book’s planning stages, by spreading the word through a Kickstarter or Indiegogo campaign, for example. This helps increase awareness of an author’s project while raising money for production and distribution, and testing whether there is strong enough interest to proceed.”<sup>5</sup>

In addition to telling familiar or relatable stories in fresh ways through strong plots and characters and targeting parents and gatekeepers, adding a personal component to promotional efforts is suggested as a marketing tactic that works. A 2015 *Publisher’s Weekly* article cites one self-published author, Alonda Williams (*Penny and the Magic Puffballs*), who wrote her picture book “to help give her African–American daughter confidence about wearing her hair differently from other girls in her class.”<sup>6</sup> Williams then utilized Facebook to connect with her prospective fan base of parents by starting a page centered on the story’s main character and

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<sup>3</sup> Palmer [15].

<sup>4</sup> Palmer [15].

<sup>5</sup> Palmer [15].

<sup>6</sup> Palmer [15].

encouraging parents to submit photos of their daughters wearing their hair in the “puffballs” worn by her main character, Penny. Once she received fan photos, Williams included some in the back of her book and gave away one free copy each day for fifteen days leading up to the book launch. According to the author, her promotional efforts helped her get over 1000 fans within the first three days of her marketing campaign. As of 2015, *Penny and the Magic Puffballs* had sold over 5000 copies.<sup>7</sup> The book’s Amazon description states that it was listed in *Essence Magazine* as one of the books “all black children should read,” and was chosen by MSNBC as one of the “most inspiring new children’s books.” Williams’s follow-up book, *Penny and the Puffballs Vol. 2*, was launched in November 2015. Though sales figures are not available, the second book is currently rated highly on Goodreads, and has received five-star reader reviews on Amazon.

While growing a fan base and getting direct access to parents, teachers, librarians and other gatekeepers is a shared challenge for children’s book publishers and authors across the board, it is an especially challenging undertaking for indie and self-published authors. Without the marketing departments that would be available to them through a large publisher, indie and self-published authors are often on their own when it comes to networking and building relationships with schools, libraries, and other organizations through which they can market their books. “With so many writers already struggling to get their titles noticed, indie authors need to put extra effort into getting schools interested in hosting their events.”<sup>8</sup>

It’s clear that getting access to events and groups—both with parents and other adults and with the children themselves—is a successful marketing technique for children’s authors. Just as authors need to find new, fresh ways of telling their stories, they are also under pressure to find innovative ways to get involved with their fan bases. Promotional endeavors such as read-aloud sessions at schools and libraries may have traditionally worked in the past—even if more so for established than emerging authors—but reading sessions alone are no longer sufficient. “Events can be a major opportunity for children’s book authors, but a straightforward reading usually won’t be enough to keep kids’ attention and open their parents’ pocketbooks.”<sup>9</sup> Julie Schoerke, founder of literary publicity firm JKS Communications, states that while her firm represents authors who write across and within various genres, children’s books tend to be most effective for authors setting up events; and children’s authors “looking to make events part of their marketing plans might want to consider ways to add extra fun and games.”<sup>10</sup>

### Presence of Traditional and Online Hybrid Models

While every publisher, imprint, and author is different, and thus each has different approaches for marketing a particular book, you would be hard-pressed to find a

<sup>7</sup> Palmer [15].

<sup>8</sup> Palmer [15].

<sup>9</sup> Palmer [15].

<sup>10</sup> Palmer [15].

children’s publisher (or author, in the case of many self-published children’s books) who does not incorporate online marketing in one way or another into their overall marketing plan. Trends and technology change almost daily, it seems, and publishers must stay ahead of the trend curve to keep up with their competitors. According to then-Marketing Director at Puffin Books, Kirsten Grant, in a 2008 interview by *The Bookseller*, the key to making children’s book branding work is to adapt to the changing market. “Marketing has changed completely since I began; the way consumers are finding out information and the ways we reach them are always adapting. There is never a moment to stagnate because there is always something new.”<sup>11</sup>

While very few would argue the importance of staying abreast of changes in technology and data delivery, the use of digital marketing must take the “big picture” into account, and—as with any traditional marketing method—should not be used carelessly or without a strategic plan in place. “Digital marketing is not a matter of harnessing a new platform just because it is there. It is about using technology to fit in with what people like to do. No product ever gets off the ground commercially just because it’s a new invention. It will only succeed if it fits in with what people are interested in culturally.”<sup>12</sup> In other words, whether utilizing traditional, age-old marketing methods, or new-age methods focused on the online audience (or a combination of both, as most publishers are doing), successful marketing plans must be targeted and detailed, with specific goals identified prior to implementation.

Book marketers in today’s digital age must understand the advantages that come with utilizing digital marketing techniques, how those techniques might be more valuable than traditional marketing approaches, *and* when to use which. “Digital marketing not only has the power of websites, social networks and e-mails behind it, it has—and this is a huge advantage over traditional marketing—flexibility and currency.”<sup>13</sup> While a strong argument can certainly be made for the use of traditional marketing methods—albeit in a controlled approach—to promote a given book, the advantages of digital over some traditional marketing methods are hard to ignore.

Traditional marketing to *individuals* (in particular for most consumer books) would be hideous in cost and beyond the consideration of any sensible person. It would entail the cost of printing your pieces, putting them in envelopes, and postage. Add to that the improbability of finding out the name and address of every potential buyer of your books, and you can see how that way madness lies. Until now, getting through to those book buyers has mostly meant securing good reviews and excellent display coverage in bookshops. This makes one immediately vulnerable to two key parties: the booksellers and the reviewers. We need them, but we also need to make ourselves less dependent on others.<sup>14</sup>

Aside from the obvious advantage of removing the high cost and tedious task of printing, compiling, and sending out paper mailers and similar print marketing

<sup>11</sup> Davies [5].

<sup>12</sup> Davies and Balkwill [4].

<sup>13</sup> Davies and Balkwill [4].

<sup>14</sup> Davies and Balkwill [4].

materials that for so long dominated many publishers' marketing plans, digital marketing has another, perhaps less monetary advantage: buyer accessibility. It's no secret that consumers today want mobility, ease of access, and speed at their fingertips, no matter the product they're seeking—and books are no different. Readers can now connect directly with one another—and with authors and publishers themselves—in more ways than ever before, so the online discussion (or lack thereof) surrounding a book can often make or break that title. Digital marketing includes a number of platforms and delivery methods, so good marketers should approach the use of digital marketing methods by putting their efforts into more than one type of online marketing (after all, even with pre-digital traditional marketing methods, it was ill-advised for anyone to put all their marketing dollars into one bucket). Following the same thought pattern, it is essential for children's book marketers to devise a plan that fits the book and its audience best, then determine which types of digital marketing most closely apply to the end goal. Social media and direct-to-consumer marketing are no longer optional components of a cohesive marketing plan for most publishers today. "Digital marketing is incredibly effective in spreading the word about a book, and is so widespread now that it must be included in the 'basics' of marketing."<sup>15</sup>

That being said, however, the good marketer also fully understands that it is neither realistic nor wise to attempt to remove traditional methods altogether; in fact, almost all publishers *need* both. "A good marketing campaign is of course an integrated one using traditional and digital methods. Online media are currently second only to television in terms of the number of hours people spend on them."<sup>16</sup> For many publishers, traditional "direct mailings" have now been replaced by similar, digital mailings sent directly to readers via email. Simply switching from a traditional, print approach to a digital approach does not necessarily always yield better results, however. Some niche and specialty books (like photography or children's activity books), for instance, might *still* be best promoted through hard-copy, glossy catalogue mailers. The key for any publisher is to identify the target buyer, then identify the best method or medium through which to reach that buyer.

It is also of fundamental importance to keep in mind, when devising a marketing plan, where the intended marketing efforts fall within your budget—both in terms of time and money. Just because digital methods might *seem* more cost-effective, most publishers find that the effort and time required to devise a successful digital marketing approach are actually comparable to the effort and time required of traditional marketing methods. "Publishers say they spend as much time rolling out an online marketing campaign as a traditional one."<sup>17</sup> For instance, publishers need to do substantial research prior to moving forward with most marketing campaigns, both to identify and understand their intended audience, and to ensure their approach both makes sense for that audience and is cost-effective. For children's publishers, this

<sup>15</sup> Davies and Balkwill [4].

<sup>16</sup> Davies and Balkwill [4].

<sup>17</sup> Rosen [17].

research is often twofold—as the publisher (in the case of books for children under twelve) has a dual audience: the adult gatekeeper and the child.

## **Current Marketing Challenges in Children’s Publishing and How they are Faced**

There have always been new and varying challenges that arise at different times for publishers of all types, and marketers continue to be confronted with new obstacles to which they must adapt in order to successfully promote their books. Children’s publishing specifically has its own set of marketing challenges, perhaps the most prominent and long-standing of which being the need for publishers to make their books appeal to both the child *and* the adult buying the books. In addition to this ever-present challenge, there are a number of others that frequently present themselves to children’s publishers (and authors themselves, in many cases).

### *Overabundance of Content*

More does not necessarily denote “better,” and publishers today face an ongoing challenge that plagues many businesses: the overabundance of content. With the rising number of small and indie publishers, in addition to the many platforms available for self-publishing, we’re seeing more books printed and sold than ever before. How, then, can publishers ensure their children’s book gets noticed in the vast sea of competing titles that consumers are bombarded with daily? This, it would seem, is a key question for many children’s publishers today. According to Elenita Chmilowski, Library Marketing Manager at Ingram Content, the content itself is often what drives children’s publishing sales and marketing success. Children’s book publishers are always looking for new and innovative ways to get their books to appeal on a personal or emotional level to the adult buyer, under the assumption that the adult will pick a book that strikes a personal cord with him- or herself to then give to the child recipient. At the end of the day, the *story* itself matters. When it comes to children’s fiction, said Chmilowski, “there’s got to be something really wonderful about the story to grab the attention of the adult and the child.”

### *Competition*

Another challenge faced by children’s publishers—and one which directly ties into the overabundance of content—is the competitive market. With more publishers in the mix, as we’ve seen with the rise of indie and small publishers (not to mention self-published authors), it has become considerably more difficult for publishers and authors to get their books in front of their target audience. “With a lot more publishers, there is more talent; and because of that, it’s more competitive,” Chmilowski commented. “The bigger publishers have larger budgets and more outreach, so it’s challenging for smaller publishers in that respect.” Social media has, however, helped smaller publishers create a wider reach, according to Chmilowski.

### *Library Access*

Creating a presence both online and within the groups that matter for a given title is a challenge faced by all publishers; but for children's books, libraries are absolutely key to generating interest and buy-in. After all, it is librarians and library associations who have a substantial influence in book selection, evaluation and review—both for trade and nonfiction.<sup>18</sup> As a result, their purchasing decisions often set the tone for what is both available and popular locally, state-wide, and nationally. It is famously challenging for many small or indie publishers without a large outreach to gain access into the library market, but particularly so for self-published authors. “It’s virtually impossible to get statewide library awards that launch an author onto summer or school reading lists like traditionally published books,” said Julie Schoerke, whose publicity firm (JKS Communications) began representing self-published authors after years of working with traditionally-published authors.<sup>19</sup>

These authors, then, must find creative ways of breaking into the crucial library market. *Booklist* and *School Library Journal*, both large reviewers of children's books for public and school libraries, were named by Chmilowski as important platforms through which publishers can promote their books within the school and library communities. She offers several recommendations for children's publishers looking to find their place within these crucial networks: “To begin with, you *have* to have reviews from the periodicals the librarians read. Something with a ‘this has been star-reviewed’ stamp shows that people are acknowledging it, which is the first step to getting your book out there.” Once an indie publisher has built a somewhat consistent presence this way, the library associations and their members will become more familiar with those publishers’ programs and book lists, and in turn they will be more willing to invest their resources. There is a certain level of trust that must be developed between publisher and librarian, and the more librarians know about a publisher, the more likely they are to continue a partnership.

### *Digital Versus Print Dichotomy*

It might seem logical that the popularity of eBooks today would transfer into the children's sector of publishing, resulting in challenges that are unique based upon whether the book in question is an E-book or a print book. What most in the industry are finding, however, is that physical books are maintaining their popularity over digital within the children's sector—even for middle grade and YA. According to a 2015 *Publishers Weekly* article, “E-book technology can’t yet compete with a printed picture book.”<sup>20</sup> In fact, for some kids today, print has almost taken on a “novelty” effect, with digital being what they know—and print being something “different.” A 2017 *New York Times* children's book review discusses the popularity of *Pen Pals* by Alexandra Pichard, a picture book for children between ages four and

<sup>18</sup> Horning [10].

<sup>19</sup> Palmer [15].

<sup>20</sup> O’Leary [14].



seven. Julia Livshin, the book reviewer, attributes this popularity to the premise of the story—an ant and an octopus who become pen pals, and a colorful description of how their physical letters are delivered to and from one another. “Emailing would be so much easier, but for this generation of children at least, where’s the novelty in that?”<sup>21</sup>

There are many others who would argue that there is now a considerably bigger market within children’s publishing for E-books, or at least that there is a more even balance between the success of digital and print books for children. What is made abundantly clear, however, is that digital and physical books for children require different components to be successful, and smart publishers will find a mix of the right elements to stay competitive.

Digital and print do not, by any means, need to be seen as mutually exclusive of one another. A 2013 *DBW* article puts to rest overarching concerns that E-books are “bad” for children by posing the question of why many people—both within the publishing industry and in general—feel the need to choose between *either* a physical book and an E-book. “Exposing children to stories, text, and new ideas through reading—especially when sharing the experience with an attentive caregiver—is beneficial no matter what format the book comes in.”<sup>22</sup>

### *Marketing Direct Online to Young Readers*

Another common challenge for publishers of children’s books intended for young and “pre-readers” are the legal and logistical limitations of marketing direct to children online. COPPA (the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act), is in place to regulate the Internet and make it hard for anyone to get information of a personal nature from children on the Internet. The major impact of COPPA as it affects publishers and other businesses is the requirement of those operating commercial websites, online services, and mobile apps to “notify parents and obtain their consent before collecting any personal information on children under the age of thirteen. The aim is to give parents more control over what information is collected from their children online.”<sup>23</sup> This regulation is really a non-issue for publishers whose intended reader is too young to be on the Internet at all, and is not yet advanced or mature enough to have access to a digital device with internet access. COPPA *does*, however, muddy the waters for publishers of books intended for older children, who do have access to internet content and are old enough to make their own book-buying decisions.

### *Dual Target: Adult and Child*

This brings us to the most prevalent—and consistently present—of the challenges faced by children’s publishers: the need to market to the dual audience of both

<sup>21</sup> Livshin [12].

<sup>22</sup> Bacon [1].

<sup>23</sup> Herold [9].

children and adults. For children from ages zero to twelve (and sometimes older)—and especially for children who are not yet old (or advanced) enough to read on their own, adults are the ones buying books. Adults buy children’s books for a number of different reasons: to give as gifts; to use for teaching their children a concept (i.e. ABC’s, colors, early life functions and tasks); and—in the case of other gatekeepers like teachers and librarians—to use as part of a school curriculum. “Children’s publishing remains a market in which a significant number of books are given as gifts.”<sup>24</sup> Phyllis J. Fogelman, who was editor-in-chief, publisher, and president of Dial Books for Young Readers at the time of a 1993 piece on editing children’s books, contributes further evidence of the need to appeal to both the child and the adult when promoting children’s books:

In choosing which children’s books to publish...we must also appeal to adults in order to reach our ultimate audience: the children for whom the book is meant in the first place. It is generally adults who buy the books before they actually reach children, although teenagers do choose books—mainly paperbacks—for themselves. But even these books must first be filtered through booksellers and librarians—more adults.<sup>25</sup>

In response to an interview question about how publishers’ approaches differ between the adult and the child target, Elenita Chmilowski said “most of the time, I’m marketing to the parent or adult buyer, not the child. The child is given a book—it’s not like they can go to the store and pick something their friends have the way they pick out cereal while at the grocery store with Mom. So, usually we’re targeting the adults who are buying it for the child.” Similarly, a blog summarizing *Education Week’s* 2017 study on children’s reading habits states that “when children have trouble finding books they like, they turn to parents and teachers.”<sup>26</sup> And, as it turns out, there are correlations between what the adult buyers and the children readers like. There has to be something visually or tactilely appealing about a children’s book for it to grab the attention of an adult—and, ultimately for that appeal to translate into a sale. Regardless of the fact that children’s publishers have traditionally faced—and will continue to face—the need to market to both adults and children, the ways in which they can respond to this challenge to remain successful are continually evolving.

## Marketing Strategies

### Overview

While moving away from traditional marketing methods is a good move for some titles—assuming there’s room in the marketing plan and budget for creative

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<sup>24</sup> O’Leary [14].

<sup>25</sup> Fogelman [7].

<sup>26</sup> Stoltzfus [18].

experimentation—there is still something to be said for the use of traditional marketing methods for the promotion of children’s books. In Laura Pepper Wu’s blog, “Six Powerful Ways to Market Children’s Books,” guest authors Gail Kearns and Penelope Paine urge children’s book authors and publishers to make sure they aren’t overlooking what many might consider the “obvious” or “basic” components of a good children’s book marketing plan, including school visits and author events, book fairs, library association partnerships and events, catalogue sales, and specialized direct sales. Kearns and Paine also encourage publishers and authors looking to successfully promote a children’s book to become familiar with the many awards available for outstanding children’s books—particularly those for indie or emerging authors that are not so widely sought-after as awards like the Caldecott and Newbery, but that could effectively highlight and create more buzz around a new title.<sup>27</sup>

### Finding a Niche

For many indie children’s publishers and self-published authors, finding a niche—and utilizing that niche to create specialized marketing strategies—has become the key to success. “‘There’s a book for every reader and a reader for every book.’ The challenge—and reward—say those in the field, comes from putting the right book together with the right reader...Increasingly, these plans include not only pitching titles via established avenues, but also using a number of smaller, targeted campaigns to reach niche readerships.”<sup>28</sup>

A *School Library Journal* article from 1998 names “nontraditional outlets” such as “drugstores, toy stores, museum shops, and boutiques” as the target distribution channels of many publishers’ marketing efforts.<sup>29</sup> While the article is nearly two decades old, the use of such “specialized” retailers and outlets to sell children’s books maintains the same importance now. Small, specialized niche shops have been utilized more and more by publishers looking to get their books noticed, and children’s books are often the perfect fit for such retailers’ displays. These can include character- or theme-driven point-of-purchase book displays, spinner racks, posters, special packaging, and other types of niche marketing approaches that fit best with the style or setup of the store.<sup>30</sup>

### Creating a Brand

In addition to identifying a niche market and targeting that niche in equally specialized, unique marketing strategies, branding has also become an important piece of many children’s publishers’ strategic plans. A 2003 *The Writer* article credits branding as the “catchword” that has come into play within the previous 4 or 5 years,

<sup>27</sup> Kearns and Paine [11].

<sup>28</sup> Maughan [13].

<sup>29</sup> Elleman [6].

<sup>30</sup> Cole [3].

asserting that emerging or little-known children's book authors must actually work just as hard—perhaps even harder—to create a brand than the authors who have successfully built brands around titles like *Goosebumps*, *The Babysitters Club*, and *Harry Potter*.<sup>31</sup>

It is also worth mentioning that the author brand is often of equal value to the book brand, and authors should be active in their own marketing—be it through social media platforms or in-person events. Book tours are still surprisingly successful for many titles, but even for indie publishers with new authors, making use of regional considerations like the geographical region the author is from can yield good results. “Capitalizing on where a book is set or where the author or illustrator lives is a common and often very successful hook for promoting a title.”<sup>32</sup>

### Tailoring Creative Strategies to Combat Specific Challenges

As we've seen, there are quite a few challenges that children's publishers face, and each publisher has its own set of challenges unique to its brand, its mission, and its goals. Smart publishers devise innovative, fresh ways of combatting their most prevalent obstacles as those obstacles and distribution avenues continue to evolve. As Elenita Chmilowski summed up, the “best” strategic marketing plan for a children's publisher of any size is a combination of several things. “It's always challenging for publishers to get their book, *instead* of someone else's book, in front of someone—whether the goal is to get that book in front of librarians, parents, or large retailers. The more creative you are, the more successful you'll be—especially if you're a smaller publisher.” What it boils down to in today's highly competitive market is that publishers need to find the right combination of traditional and new-age methods to best fit their target audience, once that audience is identified. Many publishers, according to Chmilowski, still make frequent utilization of catalogs to be sent to libraries and other distributors, send sample books, and set up author events. The same publishers, however, will also frequently make use of social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram and Facebook to build a brand and give their authors a platform, and they will often incorporate podcasts with author interviews and other content that becomes useful when an author is unable to schedule an in-person, live event.

### Conclusion

While it is never truly possible to predict exactly what future children's book trends marketers will need to respond to, what we do know is that traditional marketing methods are maintaining their importance right alongside online marketing methods in many cases for children's books of all genres and levels. While online marketing approaches are undoubtedly essential in today's publishing climate, traditional methods act as a strong complement within most marketing plans—whether they be

<sup>31</sup> Giblin [8].

<sup>32</sup> Maughan [13].

constructed by Big Five marketing departments with large budgets, or by self-published authors looking to build their audience. As such, it has become overtly clear to those in the industry that online marketing cannot be ignored nor displaced—but neither can tried-and-true, traditional methods. In a way, the two are needed to balance one another out; and the strategic application of both, depending on the intended audience and goal(s) for the book in question, is what ultimately leads to the successful marketing of a children’s book.

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