

Yes you can make your own book trailer video. It's easier than you think!

## BRAINSTORMING YOUR TRAILER:

### **The Brand**

Your trailer **MUST** reflect your author brand (the image you want to project as an author). Pick three words that describe you and your books and make sure your trailer reflects them. This means that the typeface, the clipart, the tone, and the music all scream your brand. For me those three words are, "funny, fun, and sexy." If **EACH** and **EVERY** element doesn't reflect all of these things, my trailer isn't doing its job.

### **The Concept**

Now, you need a concept.

- 1) A concept is an idea that's *never been done before* that you can build your trailer around.
- 2) A synopsis of your book can be a concept, but be careful. Most book trailers are plot summaries, and that's a good enough reason to avoid them. You can tell what's in your book, but it shouldn't read like your elevator pitch or your synopsis. In my case, my concept *must be funny*. Maybe yours must be scary, romantic, erotic, etc.
- 3) Think campaign. The best concepts can be made into at least three videos. Hey, you're making them yourself, so why not? Repetition and constant exposure is the **KEY** of good, effective advertising.

### **Steal These Concepts**

Here are some examples of concept-driven book trailers:

1. The cover riff: Sexiest Man Alive by Diana Holquist  
<http://youtube.com/watch?v=qWbmwUwlawQ>
2. The contest-driven book trailer: Julianne Maclean posted two trailers and asked people to vote for the one with the best ending (no longer on-line)
3. Author -driven: author interview, author doing fun stuff: Meg Cabot  
<http://youtube.com/watch?v=5jAPlitb9kE>
4. Big Idea: Can you state your book in fifty words or less and make it sound intriguing?  
<http://youtube.com/watch?v=O5f207pgabI>
5. Reviews interspersed with your cover set to music might be the absolute best book trailers ever. Fast, convincing, cheap, easy, believable. Sometimes, less is more.

### **A Few Dos and Don'ts Before We Go On**

1. Don't think of your book trailer as a movie trailer. The success of movie trailers is based on excellent actors and film. You don't have these, so it won't look professional.
2. Don't be boring. Anything over a minute is boring. Really. The number of "views" you get on YouTube counts the number of people who quit after a few dull seconds. You need people to watch all the way through (and not just your mother)! Sixty seconds MAX!!! *If your trailer is boring, I'm going to think your book is boring.*
3. Don't use anything illegal. Copyright rules should be observed AT ALL TIMES. You cannot set your video to the latest Britney Spears tune. You cannot use clip art that you haven't paid for. Play by the rules; you wouldn't want anyone "just using" your book without paying.
4. Don't think that because you can do it, you should. Once you see how easy video software is, you'll be tempted to spin your titles, set them on fire, "peel" your cuts, flash your name in rainbow strobe. Please don't. It's distracting and it screams "amateur."
5. Proofread for clichés. For example, please don't say, "Gone with the Wind is a Sweeping Epic Drama of the south." Gag. No one will believe you. Show it with pictures, prove it with dialogue, explain it with quotes.
6. Proofread for overblown "advertising" claims. For example, if you say, "It will make you laugh; it will make you cry," no one will believe you. You can say, "*Romantic Times BookClub* said, 'It made me laugh; it made me cry.'" See the difference?
7. Don't show and tell the same thing. If your words say "Luke Musclehead was gorgeous" don't show us a picture of a gorgeous man. Instead, show a gorgeous man and say, "Luke Musclehead was smart, clever, and very, very...funny."

The Down And Dirty Guide to Making Your Own Book Trailer  
(Holquist & Faber)

**Storyboard It**

A storyboard is a frame-by-frame outline of all the audio and video elements of your movie. It allows you to carefully break down the elements you need and helps you to analyze the story you're telling. Here's an example of the first page of a storyboard for Rita TrashTalkin'. Let's analyze this storyboard:

Rita Trash Talkin' Storyboards  
4/27/08 revise #2

**AUDIO:**

Music up:  
Intro music.  
Exciting and upbeat  
*a la* evening news  
program

Music Under.

Reporter, V.O. ;  
(intense and over-  
dramatic, like a sports  
reporter)

The Rita Awards.

The most coveted prize  
in the romance-writing  
world.

In Single Title  
Contemporary, it's come  
down to the final eight.

And while these authors  
may write romance, love  
is *not* the name of the  
Rita game.

SFX: Exciting music up.

**VIDEO:**

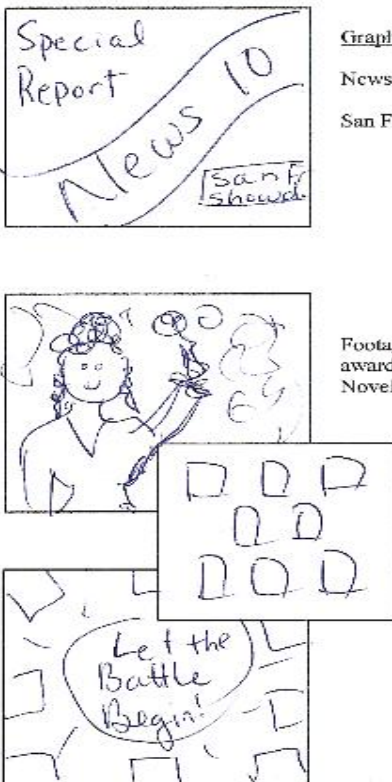
Graphic Up:  
News 10 Special Report  
San Francisco Showdown

Footage of last year's Rita  
awards (from Romance  
Novel TV)

Cut to Graphic:  
8 covers.

Super over graphic:  
(very overdramatic, *a la*  
The Daily Show)

Let the battle begin.



## **Resources**

Unless you're also an artist and a musician, you'll need to find images and music to bring your storyboard to life. But don't forget your two best resources:

1. Your Cover. Cover recognition is one of the best benefits of book videos.
2. Your Creativity. With the memorable, catchy concept, you don't need much else.

Free resources: There are materials available that are free for commercial use—just be sure you understand the terms of use. These resources can save you money, but are limited—it may be difficult to find what you need to bring your vision to life.

Free images: <http://commons.wikimedia.org>, <http://www.sxc.hu/>  
<http://pstutorialsblog.com/44/free-stock-photos/>

Free fonts: <http://www.dafont.com>, <http://www.fontgarden.com>

Free music: <http://www.jamendo.com> (search for commercial use),  
<http://creativecommons.org/audio>

Royalty-free resources: These materials can be purchased for commercial use by paying a one-time fee—but again, be sure you understand the terms. There may still be limits on how you can use some royalty-free content. These resources are affordable but costs can add up. There's more variety to choose from, but they're not unique (the image of your hero may be the face of another company's ad campaign!) and many are so obviously stock they may be unappealing

Royalty-free images: <http://www.istockphoto.com>

Royalty-free music: <http://www.stock20.com>, <http://www.ibaudio.com>,  
<http://www.digitaljuice.com>, <http://www.studiocutz.com>, <http://www.shockwave-sound.com>,  
<http://www.royaltyfreemusic.com>, <http://www.musopen.com> , <http://www.partnersinrhyme.com>,  
<http://incompetech.com/m/c/royalty-free/>, <http://www.stockmusicstore.com>,  
<http://stockmusic.net/>

Make your own resources if you have the skill and equipment to do so. Make your own images with design software such as Adobe Illustrator & Adobe Photoshop. Give your video a personal touch by recording your own voice over.

## **Software**

There are a variety of programs available to help you build your video, depending on your budget and skill level.

| Program             | PROS   | CONS   |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Windows Movie Maker | -Free for Windows Users<br>-Easy to Learn<br>-Premade Resources & Effects                          | -Only for Windows Users<br>-Limited Control<br>-Resources & Effects have become overused |
| iMovie              | -Easy to Learn   | -Only for Mac Users  |
| Adobe Flash         | -Total Control Over Timeline<br>-Flash player is the most widely used, if hosting on your own site | -Expensive<br>-Higher Learning Curve<br>-Complex Conversion for Upload                   |

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### **Building a Trailer**

Now let's build our trailer in using the following steps:

1. Import your images
2. Place images on the timeline
3. Add text and titles
4. Create transition effects
5. Set to music
6. Finalize and compress for the web

### **Uploading Your Trailer**

There are numerous sites where you can host your book trailer video. Where you upload it isn't as important as how you promote it, but you'll get the greatest visibility on the most popular sites. You can find a list of video-sharing sites at:

[http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/list\\_of\\_video\\_sharing\\_websites](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/list_of_video_sharing_websites)

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com>

MySpace: <http://www.myspace.com>

Upload to multiple sites at once: <http://www.tubemogul.com/>

Romance sites where you can promote your trailer: <http://watchthebook.com>,

<http://www.booktrailerpark.com>, <http://readersentertainment.tv>, <http://theromancetheatre.com>,

<http://www.book-trailers.net>, <http://www.previewthebook.com>

Let's go over the steps for uploading your video:

1. Put it in the correct file format (usually WMV, AVI, MOV, or MPEG)
2. Navigating the Upload page
3. Using descriptions and tags to give your video the most visibility

Know what's out there! Check out these videos for ideas:

Diana's Book Trailer Videos: [http://www.youtube.com/profile\\_videos?user=dianaholquist](http://www.youtube.com/profile_videos?user=dianaholquist)

Lindsey's Book Trailer Videos:

[http://www.youtube.com/profile\\_videos?user=lindseywfu](http://www.youtube.com/profile_videos?user=lindseywfu)

Other Creative Promotional Videos:

Dear Author: Lego Video Review of The Courtesan's Daughter

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuYu3WuuRtQ>

Meljean Brook: Five Easy Steps to Writing Romance

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vD0z1hSXTJM>

Deirdre Martin: A Romance Writer Reveals All

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAeT4II7V2U>

Author Talk

<http://authortalk.wordpress.com/>