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Online Frenzy:

How Wattpad Can be Used in Traditional Publishing

Taylor Thompson | May 14, 2019

Process:

Although my fascination with Wattpad began long before I found my way into the publishing industry, I first looked into Wattpad and how it can work in traditional publishing during an Introduction to Book Publishing course with Dr. Rachel Noorda at Portland State in Winter 2018. Despite Wattpad's rapid growth since its start in 2006, many publishing professionals remained unaware of its current role in the industry and how it can be used to boost the books going out into the world. In that first paper, I mainly focused on the Wattpad/writer/publisher relationship without looking very far into the future. In a later semester at Portland State, I decided to research how Wattpad could be used as a marketing tool for my Book Marketing class Robyn Crummer-Olson.

I am incredibly thankful to those who complied with my interview requests—Adam Wilson, Benjamin Sobieck, and Ali Novak—for giving me invaluable insights and detailed looks into Wattpad and its role in publishing, and where they think Wattpad is going in the future. I'd also like to thank my faculty advisor, Dr. Rachel Noorda, for encouraging me to research a weird, mostly-untapped aspect of the publishing industry. And alongside Dr. Noorda, I'd also like to acknowledge Adam O'Connor Rodriguez for offering me feedback on this research during my oral examination.

Research Question: How has Wattpad worked in conversation with traditional publishing? What do the changes in this relationship demonstrate about Wattpad's role in the publishing ecosystem? Can traditional publishers use Wattpad as a marketing strategy? Does using Wattpad minimize financial risk for the publishers they partner with?

Introduction

When we think about all the facets of the entertainment industry, publishing seems like it should be at the forefront of our minds as a constantly changing entity, pushing out new voices, worlds, and perspectives. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Publishing is one of the slowest industries to change, but with rapidly growing technology and consumer-need at an all-time high for published content, many forms of media have an impact on publishing and how the consumer views it. Due to the convenience and mobility of modern technology, many people believe that traditional, commercial publishing must take extreme strides in the future to keep up with the evolution of the technology as we know it. Although recent statistics have shown otherwise, many people seem to view publishing as a “dying” industry; they theorized this, too, when e-books first gained popularity, and yet print has remained in business. While print publishing may not be a dying industry, it *is* a relatively stagnant industry with seemingly no willingness—or no knowledge about how—to change. Until Wattpad, a website and app entirely designed to meet the needs of readers and creators alike. Wattpad has the ability to change the traditional publishing industry as it currently exists; traditional publishers can utilize Wattpad as a way to test new books or authors, a marketing tool, and a multimedia partnership, with the intent to reduce financial risk within the print publishing industry.

History of Wattpad

Wattpad is best summed up as an “online community of writers and readers” and was founded in 2006 by Allen Lau and Ivan Yuen.¹ In addition to being a frequented social media site, Wattpad considers itself to be relevant to the idea of community. It has the ability to break barriers between author and reader, and put everybody on the same page. While the site was launched in 2006, the community “grew by 40 percent in 2017” and there are now “65 million people around the world” using the site on a regular basis.² The site is assumed to boost reading time and exposure to new books due to word-of-mouth traction and the quick expanse of typical social media. One of the most efficient ways to boost a product is through word of mouth—something that is not often measurable or easy to achieve organically. According to Margaret Merga from the *New Review of Children’s Literature and Librarianship*, “Wattpad encourages students to become interactive authors.”³ Like many other social media sites, the spread of Wattpad has been exponential, gaining attention from small and big publishers alike. “Wattpad attracts a new member every two-and-a-half seconds and twelve million unique visitors every month. About nine in ten users are primarily readers, not writers.”⁴ While the majority of users on the site do not have any stories on their profiles, and instead are mostly readers, the site functions as a collective space for those readers and writers to interact over what they love most: books.

Fanfiction Culture on Wattpad

¹ Calvin Reid, “Wattpad Grows from Reading Site to Multiplatform Entertainment Venue,” 1-10.

² Melanie R. Bold, “The Return of the Social Author: Negotiating Authority and Influence on Wattpad,” 117-136.

³ Margaret K Merga, “Are Avid Adolescent Readers Social Networking About Books?” 1-16.

⁴ Grace Bello, “Wattpad Revolutionizes Online Storytelling,” 1-4.

One important thing to note about Wattpad and how it interacts with its consumer is the legitimization of fanfiction, and the culture that comes with it. Fanfiction—most commonly written about established franchises or celebrities—provides an endless loop of content centered on one object, but has a built in fan base for it. Similar to erotica, young adult, and several other publishing categories, fanfiction has a notorious stigma against it; it is often coined with the terms “amateur” and “vanity” in tow. Wattpad, however, allows this fanfiction to be a safe, successful category on the site. Instead of lumping fanfiction in with multitudes of other categories, Wattpad proudly displays the category and allows fanfiction to be entered into their contests and awards. While the idea of fanfiction and “fandom” culture is still relatively new—it really only became popular in literature within the last fifteen or so years, thanks to crazed phenomena like the *Harry Potter* series and *Twilight*—fanfiction readers are more voracious than most and devour any content they can find. Although fanfiction is losing some of the stigma against it with the publication of *50 Shades of Grey* (Vintage Books), *Beautiful Bastard* (Gallery), and *After* (Gallery), Wattpad presents a safe space for fandoms to go and showcase their work, which encourages further traffic to the site. On Wattpad, writers can post virtually anything they want; this ranges from short story collections to original fiction to fanfiction based on different types of media. Although many literature fanatics do not often consider fanfiction to be as legitimate as commercially published work, there are many examples of how Wattpad has legitimized this particular type of writing. One example of Wattpad having the ability to legitimize fanfiction is when Sony [the producer of One Direction’s albums] commissioned a “One Direction story to celebrate Valentine’s Day 2012 as a gift to their fans.”⁵ From the start, media companies were beginning to utilize Wattpad as a way to better reach the desired consumers. Apart from being a trend on Wattpad, fanfiction is considered a “way for people

⁵ Antero Garcia, “Making the Case for Youth and Practitioner Reading, Producing, and Teaching Fanfiction,” 353-357.

to come together around interests and shared passions.”⁶ This [shared passions] is a similar definition to what Wattpad itself has become to many writers and readers. Fanfiction encourages people to both read and write—the function of Wattpad at its core—and is often a gateway for talented writers to start their craft at an even earlier age, which generally leads to better-written content over the span of their careers.

How Wattpad Already Works with Traditional Publishing

Thirteen years into its creation, Wattpad has many established partners within the entertainment industry. While some of those companies are production companies—Paramount and NBC, for example—Wattpad also has established connections with some larger publishers in the industry. Instead of briefly covering each partnership, I decided to conduct case studies with two of Wattpad’s most frequented partnerships: Sourcebooks, Inc. and Simon & Schuster.

➤ **Sourcebooks, Inc.**

One of Wattpad’s first partnerships began in 2013 with Sourcebooks, Inc., when Wattpad really began gaining traction, popularity, and a little recognition from bigger publishing names. Sourcebooks, Inc. was established in 1987 and deemed one of the fastest growing independent publishers in America, and as of 2016, is one of the top twenty publishers in the U.S.⁷ The original idea behind this partnership: the contract language would be altered to allow books to remain on the Wattpad site in their original form—unedited, but still free to users on the site—and Sourcebooks would go through the traditional publishing process with the author in tandem. Sourcebooks would ensure that the “books be edited with new

⁶ Garcia, “Making the Case...”

⁷ Sourcebooks, Inc., “About Us.”

chapters and other added material, and produced...for general bookstore distribution.”⁸ The publisher has many contracted authors from Wattpad including Isabelle Ronin (@isabelleronin), Estelle Maskame (@EstelleMaskame), Natasha Preston (@natashapreston), Kara Terzis (@Kara_writes), and Ali Novak (@fallzswimmer).⁹ As part of my research, I conducted an interview with Novak to talk about her experiences with Wattpad and how they coincide/influence her experience with traditional publishing. Novak posted her debut novel, *My Life with the Walter Boys*, on the site when she was just fifteen and Sourcebooks published the novel in print in 2014.¹⁰ Since her debut, Novak has signed a four-book deal with Sourcebooks for a series (*The Heartbreakers*) revolving around a fake boy band and their attempts to find love. In addition to the book deals with an established publisher, Komixx has recently secured the television rights to *My Life with the Walter Boys*.¹¹ Komixx mentioned that sourcing titles from Wattpad is an attractive element from the company because of the highly engaged fanbase that follows the popular stories. From being fifteen and posting her writing on the internet to securing a television series based on that original book, Wattpad has changed Novak’s entire life. One thing she said that really stuck out to me about the connection between the two was this: “I could never find something that made me as happy as writing and it’s the best choice I have ever made. I don’t think I’d be where I am without Wattpad—I wouldn’t have known where to even begin without Wattpad—because sharing your writing can be hard and its an unsure experience.” When I asked her about Wattpad in conversation within traditional publishing, she said, “They have a lot of things planned for the years to come, I’m excited to see what happens.”¹² Wattpad is

⁸ Caleb Reid, “Sourcebooks, Wattpad Team Up To Launch YA Authors.”

⁹ The “@” leads to their Wattpad usernames.

¹⁰ Heloise Wood, “Wattpad ‘Sensation’ Novak Snapped up by Komixx.”

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ali Novak interviewed by Taylor Thompson, Personal Interview, 2019.

a huge corporation and is only growing; the industry can see it, writers can see it, and readers can see it. After being inspired by the likes of Novak and other talented Wattpad authors, Sourcebooks decided to utilize Wattpad as an innovative way to encourage submissions; the big idea is to give writers another way to connect to Sourcebooks without a literary agent. Now, a writer can tag their story with “submit2sourcebooks” and editors will comb through the tag, similar to combing through a slush pile or receiving submission from literary agents.¹³ While this is an obvious benefit for Wattpad and the writers on Wattpad, Sourcebooks benefits from this facet of the partnership, too—they have the opportunity to see how readers are engaging with the content, and how the writer responds to these interactions.

➤ **Simon & Schuster (S&S)**

Another important partnership that put Wattpad and traditional publishing in conversation with each other is their relationship with Simon and Schuster. Although the partnership with Sourcebooks was important in the development of the site, the partnership with Simon and Schuster is arguably more beneficial since S&S is widely known as one of the “big five” publishers headquartered in New York, making it more of a household name than Sourcebooks; it also helps that the Simon and Schuster partnership resulted in the biggest success story of Wattpad to date: Anna Todd (@imaginator1D). Todd got her start on Wattpad after publishing the first few chapters of her Harry Styles fanfiction, *After*, to the site in 2013. Adam Wilson, former Senior Editor at Gallery Books (S&S), acquired *After* in 2014 when the series went to auction with all five major publishers and sold in a six-figure deal, with Wattpad acting as literary agent for Todd. Part of my research included an interview with Adam Wilson; I wanted to gauge the process of working with Wattpad from

¹³ Sourcebooks, Inc., “Wattpad and Sourcebooks: An Innovative Partnership.”

the perspective of an industry professional and learn about the process from the insider who brought the most-famous Wattpad story to life. Wilson offered strong insights into the acquisitions process for a popular Wattpad title, and in analyzing the information from the conversation, I will be using a few larger quotes from the interview; much of which Wilson said stands on its own and should not be spliced, but instead analyzed with full context.¹⁴

Q: What was the acquisitions process like for *After*?

A: In many ways it was fairly straightforward: Wattpad agented the project to us, and to all the other publishing houses. The tricky part was also the innovative part: Wattpad required that the full original text of *After* be allowed to remain up on their platform even after the book was published. For internet-to-publishing-house projects that was unheard of, but I knew this book could work. Essentially my points were that taking it down would a) be like lopping off an entire arm of social media in the form of Wattpad, b) be seen as a betrayal by Anna's current fans, who had supported her, c) be cutting Wattpad's marketing ability, and d) would be non-negotiable anyway.

Since acquiring *After*, Simon & Schuster has published nine titles by Todd: *After*, *After We Collided*, *After We Fell*, *After Ever Happy*, *Before*, *Nothing More*, *Nothing Less*, *The Spring Girls*, and *The Brightest Stars*. Although the contract language was different than acquiring a book through a literary agent, Wattpad proved to be a useful tool to Simon and Schuster by keeping a large chunk of Todd's readers in a position where content is always accessible. One thing publishers need to understand about Wattpad is the social, community aspect of the site. These are voracious readers with heart, and alienating those readers by taking the original content off the site would have been a disservice to readers who effectively launched

¹⁴ Adam Wilson interviewed by Taylor Thompson, Personal Interview, 2019.

Todd's career. This type of acquisition—where the drafted content is available for free online—is often a valid concern for the sales team at a traditional publisher, but in order to reach the full span of Todd's audience *and* create a financially viable product, keeping the original content on Wattpad was key to the success of *After*.

Q: From a financial standpoint, could you point to a clear correlation between Anna's Wattpad readers and the amount of print copies sold?

A: At the time, Anna was the highest-trafficked author Wattpad had ever had, by a huge margin. Her books went on to sell millions of copies worldwide (doing even better abroad than here). So by all the metrics, it was clear to us that her existent readers were supporting her by buying print copies, and then other people got on board through the buzz created. We had a pet theory that many of her readers wanted that physical book as an artifact of what they already knew about online.

DecisionKey—which does not include reports from Amazon—logs the published *After* series at 344,722 copies sold¹⁵ since its release, despite the original version still accessible on Wattpad, and the *After* movie released (Aviron Pictures) on April 12, 2019 and hit number one in eight countries. Todd is both a *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author, and now has publishing and producing credits under her belt, and Simon and Schuster has a sales-consistent author with a separate company pitching in their marketing efforts. The “pet theory” Wilson mentions is particularly interesting—it evokes the sense of community Wattpad has spent the last thirteen years building that I mentioned earlier. With a phenomenon like *After*—consistent chapter uploads, millions of reads and comments and votes, tons of user interaction—one can assume that the original *After* readers (fan name:

¹⁵ NPD DecisionKey, “After.”

Afternators) felt a sense of ownership over the characters, the book, and even Todd. Todd's readers were consumed with the story and wanted to physically capture the moment, physically hold something *they* felt responsible for, and it shot Todd's career to the top.

Writer's Rights?

One common argument many writers use for not posting content on Wattpad is that they do not want to lose the initial (i.e. First) publication rights when their goals are more aligned with the traditional publishing model. While stories on Wattpad are considered previously published content, the increasing influence of Wattpad in the publishing atmosphere and the amount of Wattpad authors who are now traditionally published means that the First publication rights are a non-issue. Is it worth it to include your Wattpad statistics when querying agents or publishers? Absolutely. Although the statistics will not impact the chances of being traditionally published in any way but positively, they are important for an agent/editor to know for one simple reason: contract language. A book deal contract will need to talk about the originally posted content and what will or will not happen with it in the future. Since this is a fear many talented writers have, Wattpad has even included a section on its FAQ page specifically about rights, which I will list details of below.

- You own your story and Wattpad is another venue to share your voice and create more exposure and opportunities for you to get your story published, or even produced.
- You own all the rights to the content you create and post on the Wattpad.
- Posting on Wattpad doesn't mean you lose First Rights nor would it be viewed as a reprint by a publisher.

- You can remove your story whenever you want.¹⁶

Wattpad is notorious for supporting its writers and boosting creators of original content. While Wattpad may act as a liaison for some authors on the site, there are many testimonies online about how Wattpad intends to nail down the goals of their top writers and help them reach those goals; those goals would almost always be unreachable if Wattpad claimed rights over the stories posted on the site.

No Risk, All Reward

Another topic worth mentioning regarding Wattpad and traditional publishing is the consumer and data driven model of Wattpad versus the industry prestige model of traditional publishing when it comes to acquiring a new title. Going along with the fast-paced changes of our technology and trends today, Wattpad is updated every minute of every day with a team of “ambassadors” sorting through the genres on the site to ensure the content on the site is appropriately rated and free from violating any copyright. During this process, the team has the ability to view the trends—both established and upcoming. Wattpad is not only a place for millions of stories to reside; it is a data algorithm showcasing the types of stories people want to read. In their raw form, stories on Wattpad are racking up millions of reads and comments from readers all over the world—there is a built-in readership that is not fathomable the way traditional publishing is currently established. Instead, a quick search on Wattpad gives publishers insight to the upcoming trends in the literary world, as well as potential target consumers that might not have existed before. Wattpad has the ability to fit into traditional publishing because it uses a simple form of crowdsourcing. Crowdsourcing is word

¹⁶ Wattpad, “Frequently Asked Questions—Rights.”

that describes “content creation or co-content through user activities.”¹⁷ Since Wattpad is formulated like any other social media site, it is easy to see the data behind each story and what the consumer is thinking in real time. Publishers that utilize Wattpad as part of their process have distinct advantages:

- They have the ability to seek out talent, rather than wait for it in a slush pile.
- There is less guesswork involved—an established writer on Wattpad guarantees a built-in fanbase, so the writing is often financially viable.
- They appear to go “digital” in a more active form than the mass production of e-books or audiobooks.

Wattpad’s reach is seemingly unlimited. With virtually endless content and fresh, unique voices in the book world, Wattpad easily molds around the standard idea of publishing as we know it. It also has the potential to be used by literary agents in the same manner of seeking out talent in order to guarantee something with financial gain. Wattpad can be to publishers like an audition is to Hollywood; a taste of the talent, something concrete to hold onto that lessens the financial risk while putting something unique out there.

Wattpad as a Marketing Tool

While Wattpad and traditional publishing have many opportunities to work in conversation with each other, there are still quite a few things the publishing industry can learn from a platform like Wattpad. For the last decade or so, people, especially publishing professionals, were convinced that we were heading for “digital obliteration.”¹⁸ There are truths to this statement; most of our lives have the ability to be portrayed in some digital form one way or another, but people still crave

¹⁷ Siti Ezaleila Mustafa, and Hamed Mohd Adnan. “Crowdsourcing: A Platform for Crowd Engagement in the Publishing Industry.”

¹⁸ Sam Missingham, “Print Sales Might Be Rallying, but Don't Get Complacent.”

tangible objects, which is why the publishing business has not gone out of business yet. However, in an attempt to bridge the gap between tangible and digital, Wattpad is one of the biggest leaders in merging the two. Wattpad has the potential to give Amazon a run for its own platform—Amazon is cheap, but Wattpad is free. There are ads on the site to gain money for the company and for the members of the Wattpad Stars team, but the marketing is built solely on free enterprise, and writers make their money directly from readers on the site. This kind of model is something publishers should be looking at when creating marketing for the new works being published. Some publishers, like Macmillan, have already taken note and created similar sites (swoonreads.com), but most publishers could benefit from this type of advertising. It allows readers a taste of what they are being asked to pay for, and a way to level and connect with the writer in a way that Amazon is incapable of doing. On Wattpad, “writing is fundamentally social and supportive,” and provides the option for an “amateur writer to cultivate a fan base before ever even completing a novel.”¹⁹ Publishers who release this kind of content, whether through Wattpad or some other medium, are giving readers an insight into the writing and publishing process, and make them feel like an integral part as opposed to just a typical consumer. Wattpad is constantly building their connections among other industries, which is an aspect that traditional publishing tends to forget. While Wattpad is cultivating these relationships for its mass amounts of writers and readers, traditional publishing is much more closed-minded and focused on a mission. While it makes sense for traditional publishers to want to uphold a certain brand they have established over the years, the need for progression in publishing is overwhelming.

Wattpad Readership

¹⁹ Aarthi Vadde, “Amateur Creativity: Contemporary Literature and the Digital Publishing Scene.”

Since Wattpad is both a website and an app, they are more data-driven than the traditional publishing industry. They have personal access to data about readers—what is their gender identity, race, age, etc.—that they use in conjunction with the types of books these people are reading, voting, and commenting on. While there is not any public information about Wattpad’s data algorithms (as most sites and platforms do not reveal their algorithms), something fascinating about the site is the writer’s ability to access their own reader statistics. On each story a writer publishes on Wattpad, they have the capability of seeing votes/comments per chapter, age of readers, gender of readers, and even their geographical location. With over 65-million people on the site and a new member sign up every two-and-a-half seconds, the readership on Wattpad is spread far and wide across the world, and spans every range of people in some capacity. The best thing about this readership is that Wattpad members are not on the site for any other reason than their love of books; they do not care about proving they have read Faulkner or can analyze *Pride & Prejudice*—they care about content. Although there is no serious editing involved on Wattpad, readers are focused on character development and plot, rather than the syntax and grammar. They create a built-in fan base focused on the heart of the story, whereas traditional publishing puts its focus everywhere else—into the marketing, social media strategy, copyediting, etc. As part of my research, I interviewed Benjamin Sobieck (@BenSobieck): a Wattpad Star, author of *The Writer’s Guide to Weapons* (Writer’s Digest), and editor of *The Writer’s Guide to Wattpad* (Writer’s Digest). Since he was somebody who worked in different aspects of publishing before, but was more interesting in the writing side of things, I found his journey to Wattpad and his experience working with them fascinating, but most of what stuck out to me during our interview were his comments on the Wattpad readers. “These readers are voracious on Wattpad,” Sobieck said. “They’re highly engaged. They’re plugged into social media, they have everything going for them...the fact that they go and talk about it [the books] online, you

can't pay for that stuff."²⁰ While 500-million reads might not necessarily translate to 500-million print sales, most people would agree that one of the best marketing strategies one can implement is word-of-mouth. If a book on Wattpad has 500-million reads, it also has plenty of people talking about it—showing the book to their friends, sharing it on social media platforms, creating fan art, etc. It creates a buzz that cannot be replicated no matter how much money a publisher pours into a particular title. The readership of Wattpad is passionate, frenzied in a way that has no other choice than to impact the book's success.

Wattpad Promotes Diversity

Wattpad's entire goal is to bridge the gap of the traditional publishing model and “the new ways of making decisions based on data.”²¹ From 2017, the data pulled some interesting results that were not necessarily reflected throughout the culture of traditional publishing. Many of the topics were geared towards “diversity, inclusion, and minority representation in storytelling,” often generating traction through the use of hashtags such as “#PoC, #DiverseLit, #FreeTheLGBT, and #LGBTQ+.”²² While some of these topics had minimal representation in mainstream publishing, the data from Wattpad shows that these particular types of stories have an audience that is continually growing that would lead to viable publishing decisions in mainstream culture. Movements like these have the capabilities of altering not only the future of fiction on Wattpad, but of fiction commercially released through traditional outlets. People can no longer be defined by the same sets of stories told from different points of view; we are individuals with differing experiences who would like to read about someone like us.

²⁰ Ben Sobieck interviewed by Taylor Thompson, Personal Interview, 2019.

²¹ Ashleigh Gardner, “Anti-Bullying and LGBTQ: What Wattpad’s Data Tells Us about What Readers Want Now.”

²² Ibid.

Wattpad Books, Resource or Competition?

As they continue to gain traction within the industry and explore new ways to reach readers/users, Wattpad seems to be announcing a new deal or partnership every week with companies from all over the world. In January 2019, Wattpad announced the launch of Wattpad Books: a brand-new publishing division headed by Ashleigh Gardner, who was previously Head of Partnerships for the site's Wattpad Studios program. Wattpad has combed through the site for the launch of this division and decided on six young adult titles scheduled to be published starting in Fall 2019; each of the six titles has proven success on the site and will remain on the site in their original forms, but the writers will be paid advances and royalties that are set to be competitive with the industry standard.²³ The benefit of this division is that Wattpad is able to fill in gaps in the industry; they are taking their data-driven algorithms to explore exactly what type of content is garnering attention on the site and comparing it to previously published/announced books to showcase underrepresented voices. As a publisher, this makes them competition, right? Not necessarily. Adam Wilson says he thinks it is possible to see them as “both a resource and competition.” Wattpad knows how to cultivate an author's platform and work with them to reach their goals, which is beneficial to a publisher, and Wattpad's end goal is not necessarily the same as a traditional publisher's end goal. Wattpad has shown interest in their content being multi-platform—as evidenced by recent production company partnerships, like Sony/SYFY—while traditional publishers remain focused mostly on shelf-space and prestige of content released. The biggest way that Wattpad can be seen as competition is by taking shelf-space into account; their books may take readers' attention away from another traditionally published book, but the benefits of using Wattpad as a tool tend to outweigh the “lack”

²³ Concepcion de Leon, “Wattpad, the Storytelling App, Will Launch a Publishing Division.”

of retail space for another publisher.²⁴ Ben Sobieck added, “This is an emerging model and the model is bigger than Wattpad. And you can see that in other apps that have come around, they're kind of like Wattpad—other startups who kind of do the same thing. There's something bigger here that's happening underneath the surface of Wattpad...Wattpad is complimenting existing industries.”²⁵ Although Wattpad Books has the opportunity to bring new and engaging content to the industry—a positive for the consumer, if nothing else—they are not trying to dominate the industry by redoing the same tropes and story arcs we've seen before. Instead, they're showcasing other voices that traditional publishers aren't reaching and proving themselves as a positive part of change within the industry. They aren't afraid to take risks—with their algorithms and business model, they have more freedom to take risks than other publishers—and publishers working with Wattpad can ensure that publishers are a positive part of industry change, too.

Conclusion

Wattpad is one resource that provides benefits to readers, writers, and publishers alike. Only time can really tell how much Wattpad will be involved in the traditional publishing model, or what traditional publishers will take from Wattpad to implement into their own models. To keep up with the rise of huge conglomerations like Amazon, publishers must find outside resources to separate themselves from the pack or they are likely to get swept under. To sum it up with some parting words from Ben Sobieck: “It [Wattpad] is a tool as much as it is a platform.”²⁶ Personally, I am interested in seeing Wattpad as a way to change and improve this long-standing industry. With the regular deal and partnership announcements, Wattpad is a company to keep sights set on; I think people should continue research about Wattpad and its relationship about the publishing industry

²⁴ Wilson, Personal Interview.

²⁵ Sobieck, Personal Interview.

²⁶ Ibid.

and showcase the advancements after we have the opportunity to see how the first round of books from Wattpad Books impacts the market.

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