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An analysis of social media's influence on the consumption of self-published romantic fiction from 2010-2019

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2020
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/30769

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Abstract

The aim of this research assignment is to better understand how social media is affecting the publishing industry, with specific focus on self-publishing romantic fiction authors. How social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram are used to promote content and grow an author's following, and whether this influences the consumption of the content, will be investigated. It will also investigate whether the interactions between authors and readers on social media influences the creation of self-published romantic fiction, and if so, how?

This report will also study how social media is changing how readers are consuming content, the content created and published by the authors, who its target market is, and how successful it is as a publishing and marketing tool.

Authors are increasingly using social media platforms to promote their published content (paper, electronic, and audio). This is possible because social media provides authors with an effective platform for two-way engagement between themselves and their readers that facilitates the building of a loyal readership and following.

Social media provides users with a sense of community, and this paper aims to analyse the effect the sense of community that readers receive through social media reader communities and whether it influences the consumption of self-published romantic fiction. Readers often feel criticised for reading romantic fiction, specifically highly sexualised content, so this paper will investigate whether these communities provide readers with safe space where they can discuss the content they enjoy without fear of criticism.

The proposed methodology for the research paper includes a) a literature review of existing research that has been published and critically evaluates social media's footprint on the publishing industry; and b) an analysis of primary data gathered through two questionnaires shared with self-published romantic fiction authors and their readers.