

The Modern Editor Podcast – Episode 19: 2023 Predictions for the Freelance Editing Industry

Tara Whitaker: [0:03] Welcome to *The Modern Editor Podcast*, where we talk about all things editing and what it's like to run an editorial business in today's world. I'm your host, Tara Whitaker. Let's get to it.

Tara Whitaker: [0:18] Hi, there. Welcome to today's episode. We are going to be talking about some predictions that I have for the upcoming year, which is 2023, within the editing industry. So last year (late last year 2022), I started seeing some trends happening, that I think are going to keep happening and affect online business owners and freelance editors and the publishing industry in some way, shape, or form. So now, quick disclaimer, I cannot predict the future, unfortunately. I just want to share these things with you so that they're at least on your radar, and you can decide if they're things that you want to implement or pursue or look into and learn more about, really just to give a head's up as to what I'm seeing.

Tara Whitaker: [1:08] And admittedly, I'm calling these predictions, but some of them might be tinged with a little bit of wishful thinking on my part or some hope. And I'm, you know, I'm choosing the optimistic route here. So, I'm putting the vibes out into the world that by calling it a prediction, maybe they'll come true. So, go with me on this, all right? Predictions, hopeful wishing, whatever we want to call it. And this isn't meant to be advice, or me telling you, you should do something in your business. If you've been listening, by now you know I don't tell you, you should or shouldn't do anything. There's no "shoulding" anywhere here. I'm purely making educated guesses based off what I'm seeing being immersed in the editing and publishing industry. And some of these might be completely off-base. We're not going to know until the end of next year, which will be—or the end of this year, beginning of next year. So, it'll be fun to look back and see what happened, if anything. And you know, we know how things go. These could be completely, not even remotely close to what happens. So that'll be for another episode in early 2024. Oof, that's wild to think about. So, let's dive into these.

Tara Whitaker: [2:23] My predictions/guesses/wish list for 2023. And this will come as no shock, but there are going to be new online communities popping up. And I can say that confidently because there already are. I know with the whole ordeal with Twitter, people are looking for other places to gather; you know, they're displaced now. And to go off of that, thanks to Erika Steeves from E.S. Editing Services for this term she found. It's called the "cozy web." And essentially, it's curated spaces online that people search out and look for to find their people, essentially. And I'll [link to the article](#) that Erika referenced when we were speaking, so you know where this is coming from.

Tara Whitaker: [3:16] But it's exactly like what the Freelance Editors Club is. It's these niche memberships that are curated and, you know, made specifically for certain industries or hobbies or anything that's, you know... I mean, you can make a group about anything, right? You can have a curated, safe space for anything. And I think those are really going to start becoming more prevalent over these huge social media

conglomerates where it can be really hard to find your people. And it's also mixed with a bunch of crap. That's not eloquent, but we all know that social media can be full of crap. So, it's finding those curated spaces, I think, that's really going to start taking—hopefully—start taking over these huge, big social media platforms.

Tara Whitaker: [4:12] Another thing that has recently popped up is this whole AI and ChatGPT. ChatGPT? Right? I said that in the right order. I'm not going to pretend I can speak to this topic with any sort of eloquence or knowledge. But I do know it is going to be a hot topic this year. It's already being talked about in editing groups, and not even just in editing groups, but all over the web and all over the world. It's going to be very interesting to see how this plays out, how it develops, how it's going to affect, you know, academia, with schools. How it's going to affect the editing industry. And I'm hoping to have a chat on here with a certain editor I know who's knowledgeable on this topic. So, *wink wink* if you're listening. I do know you know who you are. But I do want to have them on here to discuss that because I think we're going to be seeing more and more of this coming out.

Tara Whitaker: [5:07] Also, I think that the trend of more video on social media is going to continue. We've already seen it with Instagram pushing their Reels out far more than they are their image posts. And of course, TikTok is out there. And even just animated videos. I think video is going to be—continue to be, I should say—big. I think that's again, social media. And I think it's going to be YouTube, as well. And we're gonna see how that goes. I'm actually thinking about diving into YouTube, but... Oof, maybe I shouldn't have said that. Now it's out there. Okay, moving on.

Tara Whitaker: [5:48] I talked about this in Episode 14, actually, about marketing outside of the box, outside of social media. And again, I keep going back to Twitter, but I really do think that created a big shift with how people are interacting and marketing and spending their time online. And when it comes to us editors and marketing our businesses, I think we really need to start with—stop relying so much on social media and start using different tools and strategies that feel good for us and bring us joy, and don't feel like a slog and ick and a job because then we're least, less—I cannot talk today, goodness—less likely to use it. It's not going to feel authentic. And it's just a downward spiral from there.

Tara Whitaker: [6:39] And going off of that with Episode 14, I talk about email marketing. And I've already seen this again become more prevalent, because, again, we're getting off of social media. And we don't own our social media platforms or profiles. So, with having an email list—whether that's a newsletter, a Substack, lead-in or opt-in, or freebie—some sort of email marketing, I think, is going to get even more popular because, again, we use an email provider. So, it's not like we own the email. But we do have much more control over when we talk to the people on our list. And we're not fighting an algorithm. And we're not coming up with all of these trends. And you know, coming up with some sort of dance or any of that, it's just straight to the point email marketing.

Tara Whitaker: [7:32] And I'm also curious if blogging is going to make any sort of comeback. I don't know if I want to say comeback because people still blog, we still have blogs out there. But I used to be a book blogger back a decade ago, in book blogging. I'm not sure if it'll go back to those days, especially the YA book blog world. Oh, my goodness. It's how I got my start in the industry. But I am wondering, with the focus on such short content with video, you know, these super quick Reels and TikToks that some people are craving more long-form content that really digs deep into a topic. I don't know how much steam that will get, but I am curious to see. You know, we've got Medium, we've got blog posts, and just in-depth articles. We'll, we'll take a look. We'll see how that goes this year.

Tara Whitaker: [8:28] And I don't know how to say this, because we're not out of the pandemic. But I guess we're in that timeframe of learning how to live with it. But there are more in-person opportunities and/or hybrid opportunities. So, joining events and conferences and meetups, either virtually or in-person. And I do think with the last few years that we've obviously missed out on a lot of those in-person connections. And I know that, you know, that's still very much a real thing. But I am seeing more and more in-person events. So, fingers crossed health-wise, we can continue that, keeping everybody safe. Because we are humans; we do need that in-person connection.

Tara Whitaker: [9:17] And then specifically for us editors, I think, along with marketing in new ways, I think we're going to be packaging our services in new ways. And what I mean by that is either having different options or creating different ways of offering our services. I know combining line and copy editing is pretty common, but it might become more prevalent. It's really going to be meeting our customer or clients where they're at. That might be different payment plan options, that might be requesting deposits or changing how we collect deposits. If they're nonrefundable or not, if they go toward the final bill or not, you know. Everybody picks something different. There's no one right or wrong way. But I think with, currently, the way the economy is, it could have an effect on our clients. It's certainly having an effect on my wallet.

Tara Whitaker: [10:25] Have you been to the grocery store to try and buy a carton of eggs? Because pretty soon, you're going to have to take out a mortgage just to get a carton of eggs. So that's, that's going to touch all industries in some way or another. And we have no way of knowing how much it's going to affect, you know, the editing industry and the publishing industry. And we'll have to see, but I do think we need to think about flexibility, while also keeping in mind that we're not, you know, running a hobby. We're running a business; we still need to earn money and pay our bills, etc. So, it's getting creative and getting flexible.

Tara Whitaker: [11:00] And this is definitely emphasis on the hope and wishing on this last one. But I really hope that we keep having more open discussions about the industry as a whole. In the Freelance Editors Club, we are incredibly open about rates. We talk about it often, and we talk about it bluntly and transparently. Like, that's not an off-topic thing. And I hope that that goes out into the greater industry, because for so long, it's been so hidden, and nobody wants to talk about it. Nobody wants to share what they charge. And I think we need to talk about it more. Full stop. I think we need,

obviously, more transparency overall just with the way publishing operates, realistic expectations. We need to keep talking about diversity and inclusion in the publishing industry and the lack thereof. Just an overall transparency is desperately needed. And I think with the strikes that are happening and the information that is coming out about the Big Five, especially, that's going to continue. And I hope it does, and I hope people are open to talking about it more, because I think it can only help the industry, and then trickle down and collectively help all of us.

Tara Whitaker: [12:24] So those are my predictions/guesses/hopeful thinking items. I would love to hear if you agree or disagree with me, or if you have anything you want to share to add to the list. I will definitely follow up and maybe include them in a future episode. So, send me an email at hello@tarawhitaker.com and let me know. And before we head out, I have one last thing. So, at the time of this episode, it's January 11, 2023. This week is the last call to join my yearly coaching program, the Business Navigator. So that deadline to sign up is going to be Friday, January 13. After that, you can still book the three-month option for coaching. But, of course, the year option will disappear because we're chugging right along into January and it's not going to be a year any longer. It's going to be eleven months. So, if you head to tarawhitaker.com/coaching, scroll down to the Business Navigator. You have a link right there to book your sessions. So, until next time, keep learning, keep growing, and know that you've got this!

Tara Whitaker: [19:57] Thank you so much for tuning into today's episode. If you enjoy *The Modern Editor Podcast*, I would be so grateful if you left us a review over on iTunes. And as always, you can head to tarawhitaker.com to connect with me and stay in touch. We'll chat again soon.