

**Author Platform Rocket  
-Podcast Transcription-**



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Voiceover:

Welcome to Author Platform Rocket, the highly acclaimed source for actionable business, marketing, and mindset strategies for authors delivered in 20 minutes or less, most of the time. In other words, this is how you sell more books while building a bigger fan base the right way. Here's your host and author, marketing veteran Jonny Andrews.

Jonny Andrews:

What is up folks? This is exciting. We've been getting a lot of great questions, I know I say that all the time, but it's actually true. We've been getting tons of feedback and questions coming into [show@authorplatformrocket.com](mailto:show@authorplatformrocket.com). If you happen to have a question, or you want me to cover some sort of topic, seriously like throw a line out. I'm excited every day. There's more email from folks who are listening. The reason I'm excited about it is because it seems that more people are listening, because the questions are getting better. They've gone from super general like: Hey how do I market my books? To what we're going to talk about today, which is what tools are we using? Because why not? I mean, clearly my business is not centered around necessarily being an author, however I am in the process of publishing some books. I know, it's been years. It's crazy. So I can talk a little bit about that in a different show.

But today what I'm going to talk about are the tools that Author Platform Rocket and all of the sites that comprise this crazy spider web of book discovery networks and services and all those kinds of things, like what are we using to make all this stuff happen? What runs the ecosystem? What are the pieces of technology that are all duck-taped and bubble-gummed together to make this stuff work?

What's nice about this is that used to actually be the case. It was all a duck tape and chewing gum kinda thing. Now we have, as a team, sort of evolved the process and gone through and honed what we're doing and changed some things and shifted some things. I'm going to break down pretty much what we're using on almost every level. Maybe you'll get some value from this, because there's a lot of these tools that are not expensive. A lot of these tools I have been using for a very long time, some of them since even 2004 when I first, very first first first got started.

One caveat I want to make before I kick this off is if you are using a tool that performs the same function, or a similar function as one that I mention, and you are super hyper good at it, don't go changing just because I recommend it. The big rule of thumb to take away is, and I'll just give this to you now instead of waiting for the end of the show, is if you're doing something that's really working, there is not need to upgrade or fix it. I know there's tons of brand new thises and thats and all these what have yous, but the reality is there's not ... You don't need a ton of stuff. Hopefully I can really drum that point home as I go through some of the things that we use internally because it's really simple. A lot of it's really simple, and we're handling many many many moving complex projects all simultaneously. I'm excited about this.

All right, let's get into the tools, shall we? Here we go. So the beginning, and the end of almost every successful business is going to come down to: can you manage the projects? Can you manage what's going on? So obviously the agency is one of our larger focuses, because obviously we're working with very high level authors. There needs to be some level of communication, like some level of continuous communication that happens with these folks, like strategic planning and all this, where they know they can get in touch with us, we know we can get in touch with them.

What we use for that is we actually use the premium version of Ryver, which is spelled R-Y-V-E-R. It is a phenomenal chat kind of situation. It's a streaming thread we use. Every author gets a personalized thread through the whole thing where they have access to their project manager, and they have access to their ads manager and all sorts of different pieces. But behind the scenes, and the reason that we upgraded to the premium version, because you can get that for free, they just give that away to the world. If you need that to be able to communicate with your team, I totally recommend it.

I don't use Slack because it really doesn't fit our needs. I don't use Basecamp because it's not the right kind of thing for us in this particular regard. We've used both Slack as well as Basecamp and we found out that they weren't the things that were going to work with us. That's not saying they're bad, it's just saying in the environment we have, and the reality that we have created, the premium version of Ryver, because it gives us the ability to create projects.

What's awesome is, how much you pay depends on how many people you have in there. So the premium version of it I believe we pay about \$45 a month. It's not particularly expensive, but it gives the entire team the ability to be assigned. So Brenda, when she does what she does, assigns different people different tasks and things like that so that everybody can stay on top of everything. It's worked for us very well. I'm not saying we won't update this in the future, but where we are now with the needs that we have, this is absolutely perfect. So for project management and also client communication we use Ryver and it's wonderful. Like I said, it's free and then if you need the premium version of it, it's like 45 bucks.

Now payment processing, like how do we get the money? Obviously if you've bought stuff with us there is a shopping cart we use called ThriveCart. I bought this shopping cart years ago. It's hilarious, I do this all the time. I think this is a very common problem with people who are online, is I just buy tools and then I forget that I bought them until it's time then I'm like, oh yeah, I bought this thing, and then I need it. Well interestingly enough, I didn't start using ThriveCart until, I want to say maybe March or April of 2017. I had owned it for, I think it's been around for a couple of years now, and it's a really nice cart. It has an affiliate program. You can use Authroize.Net. You can use PayPal. You can use Stripe. I have a Stripe account. I do not use a Stripe account right now. It's strictly for if we get referrals through Readz, that's where the Stripe account comes into play.

But when we process payments through any of the ecosystems or the agency program or anything like that, it's always going to be through PayPal. Just because PayPal, they had a lot of problems in the past, I know there's been talk of people getting their accounts like suspended. I mean, lord it has happened to me twice in my career where I had over \$400,000 frozen for like six months because I was deemed to be too high risk because I made too much money too quickly. They lost a massive class action lawsuit a few years ago and they have changed for the better, in my opinion. They lost that lawsuit because these draconian business practices they used to have.

Now when they call they're like, "Oh, thank you so much for using us. You're a super longtime customer and we love that you run your money through us." So the tone has completely changed over there and it has been better. I have not run into a problem nor heard of someone running

into that problem who's running a legitimate business for three or four years now. So PayPal is safe in my opinion. If you know differently, please tell me. So that's how we process payments, but that's just through the agency and that is through the various ecosystems that work directly with the authors.

Now what's happening is we are very rapidly moving into product production and so our personal development ecosystem, for example, is very rapidly coming into form. In fact, at the time I'm recording this I expect this to be live by the end of next week. Our first product is already up, our first sales situation is already happening. It's really cool stuff. So what I'm using for that is I'm going back to my roots on this.

I know if you've been listening to this for any length of time you know that I have been avoiding affiliates for years. My goal was ... Because my entire business was based on people driving traffic to me, it was never based around my own learning how to drive traffic. I never really spent a ton of time, like I did it for a lot of years, buying traffic, and getting emails, and Facebook, and Google and all that stuff, but my main source was always affiliate marketing. When I really committed to this business model, I said I am not going to use that. I wanted to see, can I run by cutting off my main leg? The answer is yes. What's funny is, now that we're putting out products, I'm like okay, I think I've proven that I can grow a very large successful business without any affiliates, cool. Now it's time to bring in the affiliates and like what they call 10X-ing your business kind of thing.

So the reason I'm talking about this affiliate thing is because I love, I cannot express to you how much I love the company called ClickBank. I used to call it the bubble gum pop of internet marketing, but I have completely changed my mind. What ClickBank does, and let me address something that if you are familiar with ClickBank the one perception of negativity is that's the place where scamming products go to get sold. That is sometimes true. They are a merchant account alternative, meaning you don't need to get your own merchant account, you just put products up there, you show them what you're selling. They're like, "Cool, great, awesome," and they process the money.

They don't just process the payments for you, they also handle the affiliate payouts. You can do things like where if you have someone who's referring affiliates to you, you can give them a cut of the affiliates that come through. It is absolutely the greatest freaking thing on the planet. We call them Wacky Wednesdays and every Wednesday they wire your cut of whatever this is directly into your bank account. I cannot tell you how freaking amazing ClickBank is. It's been years since I've used them and I was like, I know these people have evolved and they've changed and I want to know about it. So I reached out into my network and I'm like, "Hey guys, does anybody have a ClickBank rep I can talk to, because I'm going to fire this stuff back up, but I want to make sure that some things

are happening first?" I had an hour long conversation with one of their guys over there. Oh my word. Dude, use ClickBank.

If you're putting out products, like information marketing products or anything like that in any market and you want to get affiliate traffic to it, do ClickBank. They allow much higher price points now, which is awesome. It used to be very difficult to get like \$100 price points. Now they oftentimes process a lot higher at this point. So it's very, very cool. The main reasons I recommend it beyond anything, ClickBank, is they're just going to manage this whole affiliate thing.

Not only that, but they'll have a very nice tidy referral network within. So if you network kind of in with the ClickBank people they can say, "Hey, here's a new product you guys might want to try promoting it." If your product is something that works well with a lot of other people, they will promote your product. You can approve affiliates. You can decide who gets to and who doesn't get to do your stuff. It's just a wonderful way of doing this version of marketing. I can't recommend it enough. Really, because everything else, and I can tell you from personal experience, is an accounting freaking nightmare. The service that they provide, do it. If you're going to put out products, use freaking ClickBank. Do not manage it yourself. It is just a nightmare waiting to happen.

All right. So let's get out of ... That's payment processing for the individual stuff that we do, along with the courses that we're going to be putting out and why, of course. So now autoresponders. I have been with AWeber since 2004, or 2006. I don't remember, but it's a long freaking time. Because of that I have been grandfathered in and given pretty much their entire program for no extra charge, because they did that one time, where people who had been with them, I believe it was over a decade, were like, "Hey, here you go. Thanks for your patronage and your service." There's lots of alternatives out there, lots and lots of autoresponder companies. The only thing that you want to watch out for would be what is their import policy. Can you import subscribers to them?

There are some companies that just won't let you do it. You have to completely start over and you want to watch out for that. In fact, I would recommend placing a phone call. AWeber's not one of those companies, but also I do have sort of an unfair advantage with them because I've been with them that long and they can look at my account history and be like, "Oh, well this guy's sending close to 140,000 emails a day, every day for years." Back in the day I had 214,000 marketing subscribers and I literally just deleted them because I got frustrated with my business. By the way, don't do that. In retrospect, I probably could have had someone manage that for me.

But I like AWeber for my autoresponder. They may not be the most advanced, but I make them work. That's how it is. If you don't need the T-

bot 83,000 version of something, if you're just doing fiction, you don't need something like Infusionsoft. I've seen some authors try this before. If you're a fiction author, do not get Infusionsoft, it's like shooting a fly with an elephant gun. MailerLite, MailChimp, AWeber, something inexpensive that works that's kind of a mass market kind of product. There will come a time where we evolve past AWeber. I don't want to, but I know it's coming. So I'll let you know what happens at that point.

All of our sites, literally every single one of them is built on a WordPress backbone. That's not wordpress.com, it's wordpress.org, meaning it is that piece of software that you install where you actually set up that content management software, which is WordPress. That's all it is. WordPress is just a content management software. The reason we use it is because of the security. We think of it like this. It doesn't matter how big you are, you're always going to be a target for hackers.

I know this from personal experience because of what happened in 2016 where we had 22,000 pages across all of our site completely hacked simultaneously. It was insanity. It cost so much money to fix that, it was nuts. It was because I didn't keep things updated, so that's another caveat. But definitely keep things updated, learn how to run your sites correctly. But WordPress is one of the most secure things you can use and there's lots and lots of add-ons. The reason I love it instead of some stupid custom thing is because from a custom standpoint, you're never going to get the kind of knowledge and protection that you get when you have 1000s of people developing awesome stuff for a platform. There are so many things that you can do inside of WordPress it's just ridiculous.

Then landing pages, landing pages that we use for split testing, sometimes sales pages, all those different kinds of things. If you've ever bought something off of one of our promotion ecosystems, it's probably built from leadpages.net. Most of what you see from a sales page perspective is going to be Leadpages. I love it. I recommend the middle column there that is, it's the \$79 a month, whatever the version is where you can do the split testing. So that way you can really work on boosting your conversions. It's what we use for all of our agency clients and all that kind of fun stuff.

So now getting back to the courses that we're putting out, both for the memory training as well as perfect publishing system 4.0. The protection, the wrapping around it to make it private, there's a program called WishList. I have owned a copy of this for freaking ever. Pretty much since the year they came out I have been using WishList. I love them. They have evolved so much and I think they're totally worth it. Absolutely think they're worth it.

Then the course layout. Something that I'm using that is new is something called LearnDash. If you ever want to go to udemy.com and see what

LearnDash looks like, that's sort of a big version of it. Udemy is like one of those places where they just publish tons and tons and tons and tons of courses. LearnDash gives you that same look and feel but on your own website. The reason you'd want to do that instead of someplace like Udemy or some place like ... I can't even think of another, there's a ton of places out there. The reason you want to do that is because you get to keep your buyer data, which is vital. So if you're doing courses, make sure you're getting your buyer data. I can't stress this enough, because that data is the most important thing you're ever going to have. Like creating a list of buyers, and then automating the removal of them from your prospect list, you cannot do that enough. It's crazy. So yes, it's WishList makes it protected, LearnDash makes it look great.

Then for social media posting my team uses Hootsuite. I know there are a ton of things out there that you can use and I'm trying to remember one right now and it's not coming to the top of my head, but there's probably like three or four of them that are extremely worth it. I like Hoot because it gives us more in depth the ability to look at what people are saying and what they're doing. I can really just, we can just schedule those posts and be completely fine.

Then for our podcast hosting it's Libsyn, very simple. I think most people are using Libsyn. It's a huge volume of people are using Libsyn. I've never had a problem with them. There's some people that like to use SoundCloud. I don't necessarily trust that they're going to be in existence forever, because they've had so many problems. But those are the tools. I mean, it really comes down to those are the tools that we're using to do what we do. How to process money, how to run sites, and all this kind of stuff.

In terms of hosting, the reason I didn't bring that up is because I have a private hosting based off the security problems we had getting hacked and things like that. It wasn't the kind of hack where people got credit card numbers and personal information, we don't even have that stuff so it wasn't even ... I mean, from a personal info, don't even worry about it, it wasn't a big deal. Just from a business standpoint I'm like, come on people, this sucks. So now because of that we have moved to a private hosting company that's run by a very good friend of mine that I've known for a very long time who is extremely hypervigilant when it comes to these kinds of things. So that is not necessarily a relevant thing to you.

What I would recommend though is if you don't need too much, something like Bluehost or HostGator could be fine. But I would recommend looking around for hosting, because I used to be with HostGator and I since moved because they were purchased a couple years ago and when that happened, their customer service and customer support just dropped. I know that the company that bought them bought a large number of others. I have not kept up with who that was just simply

because it got crappy enough and I just left. So that's just kind of ... Look into that on your own.

But you can find very inexpensive hosting. You do not need to pay what we pay, especially if you're using WordPress. Don't get fooled by people who are like, "Oh buy this WordPress site building package for \$300." It's like, no don't. You can get a site for free, seriously. It's ridiculous. Or you can go on Fivver, F-I-V-V-E-R and hire someone for maybe 20 bucks to configure a site using a free theme. If you're low on loot, don't even worry about it. You can run an entire internet business for less than 100 bucks a month easily. You might even be able to do it for less than 40, if I really had to go back to my roots and be like this is what I was doing.

When I was doing it back in the day when I was completely broke I had \$5 hosting with HostGator. It was crazy awesome and I since scaled it to almost \$1000 a month with them because of the traffic that I was running. But now, like I said, private company, not something that you'll probably need but hyper secure for everybody that uses us now. But that's it. So those are the tools for the most part. I mean, there's probably a few things that I missed that are probably mostly irrelevant.

For documents and things like that we have like our little shared Google area. We just use Google Docs and spread sheets to keep tabs on what's going on in each ecosystem along with the project management stuff in Ryver and then Facebook groups. So for the social promotion that we're doing, we have authors that rent space on our page to do like Facebook Live and things like that, that's just a Facebook group. Then they have access to a Google Doc where they can pick their dates and everybody can kind of see it.

So that's really all there is. We just kind of, you know, we just evolve and grow from there. It's not an expensive array of tools. Above all else, and I said this at the beginning, you need to use what you know because every time you learn something new that's time, and is that time worth it? For me right now spending time learning how to use LearnDash and all that to get these courses out as quickly as possible is very worth it. So I have the team figuring out how to do that and then getting back to me with the bare bones basics so I can do it too. Invest a little bit of time if you need it, but if you don't need it don't. Just stick with what works and if something is broken, absolutely fix it, but make sure that it's broken before you go and do it.

Hopefully that was helpful for you and some of these tools will resonate with you and maybe you'll need some. If you're doing courses I can't recommend this stuff enough because it's very simple once you get past the initial learning curve. So there you go. Thank you so much for tuning in. If you have any questions, show@authorplatformrocket.com. I'll be talking to you later.



All right that does it for another round of authorplatformrocket.com. Remember, we're here to help you with your business, marketing, and mindset, so if you have a question, want us to cover a topic, or interview a special guest, just shoot over an email to [show@authorplatformrocket.com](mailto:show@authorplatformrocket.com). As always, we need your reviews and support. If you like what you're hearing, please leave us a glowing review on iTunes and forward the show to an author friend who might need the love and assistance. But most importantly, if you're an author who needs help with marketing, why not let us do it for you? Check us out at [authorplatformrocket.com](http://authorplatformrocket.com), always affordable, effective, done for you author marketing so you can get back to writing your books. I'm Jonny Andrews and that's it for today. I'll see you on the next show.

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