

Publicity Officer report January 2023

Hello everyone

Taking on the role of Publicity Officer in June 2022 at the same time as joining the BWI, has been a steep learning curve but a great experience. All media have had a strange and challenging year as people negotiate around billionaires, breaking out of iso, and generally still finding our feet in the new normal.

THE BWI WEBSITE continues to be updated and refreshed as appropriate, with book reviews and the 'Other Competitions' information being the most frequent and the most popular posts. The BWI website received 15,749 hits across the year, down from the 25,000 in 2021 and 17700 in 2020; the busiest month in 2022 was September. The most visited page is the 'Other Competitions' with 3482 visits in 2022, followed, in descending order, by the home page, the MRMPP, 'Writing Dialogue' post, and book review 'The Drovers Wife' all with around 1000 each. The membership page got 396 views.

Looking at the historical data, it's clear that events are what attract attention; in September 2021, the Southern Cross prize drew a lot of attention that has skewed all future stats and I suspect the lapsed Flash Fiction events were responsible for high engagement in 2020.

THE BWI NEWSLETTER has been going out fortnightly, with 486 recipients in June 2022 rising to 503 in January 2023. There has been small but helpful engagement with the audience. The annual average open rate of the newsletter email is 44% regular/often, 14% occasionally, 40% rarely/never. The newsletter is also posted to the Facebook and Twitter feeds automatically.

THE BWI FACEBOOK PAGE currently has 919 likes, 1012 followers. Posting/sharing memes, articles and news content happens on a weekly basis at least. The top post reach last month got 1,243 views; best post engagement: 577. Comments and shares are on the low side, at 34 and 21 respectively. The audience profile is 20.50% male, 79.50% female; there are no indicators available as to age of the audience, but it feels to be older adults. Top post for views was a Christmas meme, but the best engagement was the post about the poetry critique group; events/activities have the best response.

BWI TWITTER: there's been only automated activity on Twitter over 2023. The site has been suffering from toxic publicity, and it seemed easier to mothball it for a few months, but things have settled down recently, so activity will resume.

Consideration of the overall engagement with BWI media and publicity is clearly strongest when we have something to talk about: events, competitions, guest speakers. Regarding social media we also face a known divide between platforms and user profiles; while older users are loyal to Facebook, generally people are moving away from twitter (may be only temporary) and younger audiences are heading to TikTok and, to a lesser degree, Instagram.

If we want to increase reach to a younger audience, Facebook is less likely the way; one possibility would be to share the publicity role with an active user of TikTok/Twitter/Insta to take on that aspect, in coordination with the publicity officer who would maintain the core duties of website, newsletter and etc. Intermittent-only activity on the newer social sites is virtually the same as no activity. And 'no activity' equals 'invisibility'.