

# Writer's Digest

*The Smartest Ways To*  
**GET AHEAD**

**THE BEST PLACES ONLINE TO:**

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- Get Noticed
- Advance Your Career

**10 FORUMS**

WORTH YOUR WRITING TIME

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& OTHER BESTSELLERS:**

Groups That Helped Them Break Out

**18 LESSONS**

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**GREGORY MAGUIRE**

And His Own *Wicked* Genre

THE WD INTERVIEW

**MITCH ALBOM**

On His Return to Memoir

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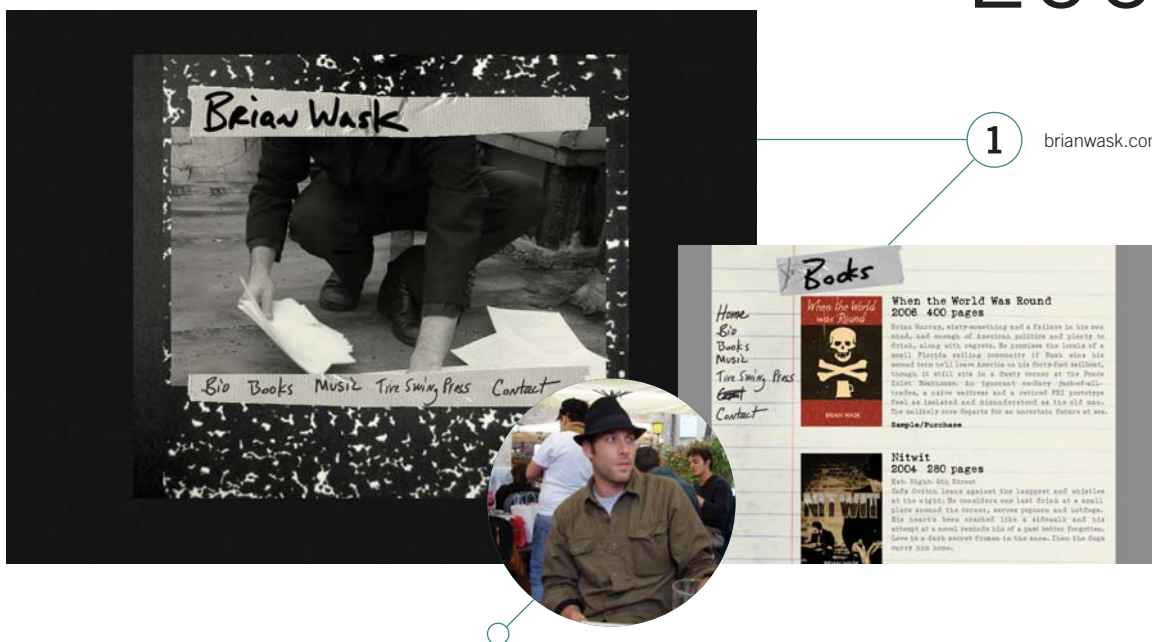
BY BRIAN A. KLEMS

Winning writer Brian Wask proves you don't need to hire a professional to create an effective website to promote you and your work.

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# BEST WRITERS' WEBSITES

# 2009



1 brianwask.com

WINNING WRITER **BRIAN WASK** PROVES YOU DON'T NEED TO HIRE A PROFESSIONAL TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE WEBSITE TO PROMOTE YOU AND YOUR WORK.

by Brian A. Klems

**E**ver see a man standing in front of the New York City Random House skyscraper with a basket of books and a sign that reads “Barnes and Mobile”? That man is Brian Wask, self-published author, musician and grand-prize winner of this year’s Writer’s Digest Best Writer’s Website Contest.

Wask’s site, [brianwask.com](http://brianwask.com), bested more than 300 nominations of personal sites designed and maintained solely by authors.

Created with the appearance of a virtual writer’s journal, the site welcomes visitors with a collage-like aesthetic of notebook covers and lined paper, complete with handwriting, snapshots and even strips of duct tape. But it’s not

## THE TOP 10: 2009 WD BEST WRITER’S WEBSITE CONTEST



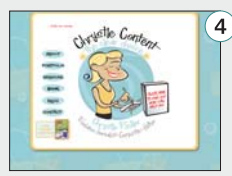
**BRIAN WASK**  
[brianwask.com](http://brianwask.com)



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**CHRYSTLE FIEDLER**  
[chrystlecontent.com](http://chrystlecontent.com)



**VIRGINIA SMITH**  
[virginiasmith.org](http://virginiasmith.org)

just decorative. The journal contains a bio; a blog; music from Wask's band, Punch Cody; and contact information. Wask says visuals that tell a writer's story are one of the four keys to any good author's site. The others, he says, are painless navigation, links to purchase your work or contact you, and writing samples. His site receives passing grades for all of the above.

"Wask's site is simple and easy to navigate without being boring," says WD Editor Jessica Strawser. "The stand-out feature is the comprehensive 'Books' page, which offers a chance to preview excerpts from each title and a full list of links to where you can buy each. It's a valuable component for any writer to have, particularly a self-published author like Wask."

After taking book-publishing classes at New York University to learn the practical side of the business, Wask began his "Barnes and Mobile" events. He also started leaving stacks of postcards advertising his website anywhere he thought his target audience would drink, think and shop. The more he can draw people to the website, the more he can make a case for his work.

"I wanted to get the word out any way I could," Wask says. "I don't have any degrees in writing and my credentials don't jump off the page. I wanted to put all my work and writing samples in one place and let it speak for itself. The website gives my work a home people can visit without leaving their chair."

For other writers looking to create their own sites, Wask suggests drawing upon what they like. What fits your voice? What fits your personality? Get into your head and find that little kid who likes to tell stories. Gather it all together and then scribble it out with shapes on paper. "I used a notebook, Sharpies and duct tape," Wask admits. He says that when you

have the idea mapped out, all you need are *Dreamweaver for Dummies*, basic Photoshop skills and patience. And while not entirely necessary, having friends who can help you troubleshoot the technical jargon is a huge plus.

While Wask has self-published his first five books, one day he hopes to land an agent. He's sending queries for his two newest novels, *Amerigo* and *The Hero of Brookdaleville Township*. In the meantime, he plans to add more writing and music to his website—a stepping stone toward his greater goal.

"I began writing short stories when I was 7 and stopped when I was 13. I started my first novel, *Fill of Blue*, at 23, after a long trip to a little island. I've been writing every day since and I don't anticipate another hiatus." [WD]

**BRIAN A. KLEMS** is the online community editor of WD.

## NOMINATE A SITE FOR 2010!

We're looking for the writer with the best personal website (or blog), one that was created and is maintained without outside design help. Sites will be judged on presentation, ease of use and marketing effectiveness. Send your nominations—and don't be shy, you can nominate your own site—to [writersdigest@fwmedia.com](mailto:writersdigest@fwmedia.com) with "Best Writer's Website" as the subject line.

Sites will be judged by the editors of WD. The top 10 will be listed in our October 2010 issue, as well as in our e-newsletter and on [writersdigest.com](http://writersdigest.com). The grand-prize winner will receive \$250; runners-up will receive one-year subscriptions to [WritersMarket.com](http://WritersMarket.com).



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