

Withholding comment

Time once again for our continuing series of random ponderings on life in cyberspace. Today's chapter: Life as a website admin.

Being but a tadpole in my writing career, I reasoned it would not be likely to need an administrator of my blog and message board. Until I built up some mass with substantial sales, it was safe to assume that the amount of comments and feedback approval would be small enough. Small enough, I estimated, for even me to administer.

I've had no previous experience with being an admin of a website. All the selections, choices, subsections and whatnot seemed a little daunting at first, but I used the time-honored method for effective people: trial and error. After a surprisingly short amount of time, most of which was spent in correcting how the forum "permissions" were set up, both the blog and the forum were ready for public use. Now, all I had to do was sit back and wait for some messages to administer.

Which happened almost immediately after my site went live. Imagine my enthusiasm as I read through the first comment "pending approval"! I read it once, perplexed. Reading it again, I felt a little let down. The comment was about how nice my website looked and did I have any tips to offer someone building one. Hmph. Not a real comment on my blog, but a comment nonetheless.

I courteously replied to the email address with an explanation about the website (built by InMotion from my mock-ups) and ended by saying if there were more details needed, please let me know. I moved the comment to the "other" section, which allows retention but does not post it to the website. I never heard back from the commenter.

A few days later, I received another comment "pending

approval". This one was obviously a random generator ("Very interesting information. I bookmarked your page.") designed to get the originating web site's address posted on other sites. How rude. Sproing! To the spam box with you!

Over the next few weeks, about a dozen of these showed up, including one from the original comment's address, this time with a generic phrase. Spam, of course, no different than your email boxes. I suppose, these comments must work like telemarketing computers, with ip addresses for websites taking the place of phone numbers for homes. Or something like that. I wouldn't suggest I have the technical background to describe the methods. It's obvious none of the sites are about writing, since the comments are so dull.

Not having any "real" comments hasn't surprised me, the website has only been up a month and the book has only been on sale for two. Hardly a recipe for a crowded message board. I could just as easily live with no comments anywhere on the site as long as people read and enjoyed the book. The "ghost" comments only serve to improve my administration skills and search for new plug-ins to counteract their presence.

Plug-ins are another feature I tread carefully around. While I am nominally the admin of the site, let's face it, I've got no idea what I'm doing in HTML world, so I sure don't want to add a plug-in that's going to put orange backgrounds and pink type all over the place. I expressly wanted the site designed for simplicity. It's a writing site, not an art project. If Jeremy and gang ever get made into comic books, *then* I'll plaster color and pictures everywhere. (Forget the movie, already. We're not making a movie.) Still, there are a few plug-ins I'm experimenting with, one of which shows up following each blog allowing readers to "share" the blog on their favorite social media. If there are others out there that make my site easier for you, I promise to look closely at adding them.

What?

Hey not every blog is going to have a witty rejoinder to close off the post. I mean, seriously, this post was pretty dry and straightforward. If you think you could come up with something better, you're more than welcome to leave a comment.