

Look Feature

with Nokia and Bacardi, making up songs for them, but the most exciting thing happened when I entered the YouTube Next Up contest earlier this year. Anyone could enter with a video explaining why they should win the prize of going to a YouTube Creator Camp at Google's London headquarters for a week.

When I heard I'd been selected, I was thrilled. And in September, me and a group of other vloggers went to London, where we learnt how to improve our videos and channels to get more subscribers. Successful YouTubers like iJustine and MysteryGuitarMan, who make a living on YouTube by selling CDs and earning revenue on adverts, also gave talks.

Incredibly, I was also awarded a £17,000 grant, so I bought a new camera and a guitar. Next year, I'm hoping to use it to record an album, which would be amazing. And I'm also going to a YouTube convention in LA in June. I heard about it at the camp and it'll be a great opportunity to get myself noticed in America too.

This year has been a whirlwind as I've been finishing my A-levels as well as making new clips all the time, which have been watched on YouTube by 2.5 million people. I'm making a bit of money from them to help towards my living costs at uni, where I'm now studying English, although it's not much yet. But as long as I'm entertaining people, I'm happy. Plus, I've made a new group of friends!"



Alexandra hopes to record an album next year with a grant she won from YouTube



PROUD
After a long struggle, Emma now earns a living as a full-time novelist



Launching her book of short stories, *From Dark Places*

'Podcasting My Novel Got Me A Book Deal'

Emma Newman, 35, from Somerset, landed a three-book publishing contract after she uploaded her novel one chapter at a time

When I started writing my first novel in my spare time, I was working as a copywriter. It was a post-apocalyptic story called *20 Years Later* and it helped me express myself as I was going through a difficult time in my life. Although I wanted to publish it, I had no idea where to start. Then a friend of mine told me about blogging, so I thought I'd give it a go by writing about my ongoing struggle to get my novel published. My followers soon grew and it was a great way to connect with other budding writers like me.

A year later, with no other way of getting my novel heard, I decided to record myself reading it with a Skype headset. I did it a chapter at a time, then posted them on my blog for people to listen to. I also tweeted links to it on Twitter to promote it and got a huge

response. Then, in early 2009, one of my followers tweeted me saying he'd heard of a new American publisher called Dystopia Press, who he thought might be interested in my book.

Instantly, I contacted the founder on Twitter and started chatting. He asked me to send him my manuscript and in September 2009 I had to pinch myself when a publishing contract arrived on my doormat. Finally, after almost 30 rejections from other publishers and agents, I'd got the book deal I'd dreamt of. I still can't stop grinning!

This May, it was published as an e-book, and then in hardback

in July. It was one of the proudest moments of my life.

Since then, I've published my first anthology of short stories, called *From Dark Places*. But I've also landed funding to write a new five-book series by an investor who came across my blog in May and wanted to support me. It means I've been able to quit my copywriting job and start to earn a living as a full-time novelist and author.

I've got a massive workload – I need to come up with about five books in eight months – but I couldn't be more excited. It still amazes me that social media enabled me to live my dreams."

EMMA'S PODCASTING GUIDE

- 1 There are loads of great template sites for blogs, meaning all you need to get started is a username. Good sites include Blogger.com and Blogspot.com.
- 2 A podcast can be posted on to any blog site, but you'll need a good microphone (I used a Skype headset) to start recording.
- 3 Use TinyURL on Twitter to shorten a link to your blog into a smaller word. You can save even more characters with services like ls.gd or Xr.com.

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