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# Seven Things to Look For In a Virtual Author Assistant

by Joel Friedlander on [September 3, 2010](#)



A few years ago most of us had never hear of a “VA” or virtual assistant. Now the job of VA is a thriving part of the online job market. With popularity has also come increased specialization, as I later I found out that there are VAs who specialize in helping authors. They are Virtual Author Assistants.

Considering the daunting tasks that authors take on these days, where they are responsible more than ever for establishing a market for their book, for growing their own [author platform](#), and for promoting themselves, it’s no wonder that more authors are turning to professionals for help.

I asked **Yvonne Wu**, a trained Virtual Author Assistant if she would explain exactly what she does and how authors make use of her services. In addition Yvonne has put together a short but important list of things to look for if you decide to find a VA of your own.

I am also an affiliate of Yvonne’s. Right now Yvonne is offering a free report [Top Twenty Press Release and Article Submission Sites](#) when you sign up for her newsletter. Here’s Yvonne’s article:

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Authors have been hiring assistants for hundreds of years. Successful authors have always relied on assistants to handle all the administrative and professional duties that they just don't have time for. After all books/novels have been around for hundreds of years.

An Author's Assistant can coordinate parts of the publishing process itself, and coordinate and assist in the marketing of the book once it is published. An Author Assistant can provide such services as Manuscript Preparation, Printing Coordination & Distribution, Public Relations and Marketing the Authors book.



Yvonne Wu

One non-fiction Author approached me and asked if I could help get her book get increased exposure and sales. The first thing I did is made sure that she had a website to sell her book on, and that she wasn't relying just on **Amazon**.

We designed her website to draw her target market to visit her regularly, by adding games and informative articles about her book's topic. We then used [search engine optimization](#) so that the search engines can easily find her site.

She quickly received requests from various media for interviews. The big draw was that her site had everything they needed to know about her and her book. She now had a store front, and from that I was able to create pitch letters and perform web maintenance.

Now, when she walks her dog children and adults regularly talk about her site, the games and informative articles and videos they found there. Oh, of course they don't forget to purchase!

## Seven Things to Look For In a Virtual Author Assistant

When an Author's Assistant is promoting your book, they can take maximum advantage of their technical know-how. The Virtual Author's Assistant has technical skills and can offer services in which they provide the implementation themselves – such as web maintenance, blog setup, social media support and podcasting. Seven things to look for when hiring an Author Assistant are the following:

1. **Collaborative Effort** Your Author Assistant is an entrepreneur as well. She can offer advice and guidance that fit your specific needs.
2. **References** An Author Assistant is self employed as well and should be able to provide several references if needed.
3. **Samples** You should be able to see on the Author Assistants website samples of the services they offer. The samples may not be client samples, but might be articles the Author Assistant has written.
4. **Contract** You are entrusting confidential information to an Author Assistant they should provide a

contract.

5. **Confidentiality** Many Author Assistants have a confidentiality clause in their contracts.
6. **Certification** Some type of specialized training, this gives an Author's Assistant special expertise.
7. **Turnover** Depending on the project you should be given a time frame on when the project will be complete.

When you hire your Virtual Author Assistant, be sure to ask them to furnish a detailed list of the types of services that are included in their pricing. Always ask for a phone consultation, there should be no surprises if you have good communication with your Virtual Author Assistant.

**Yvonne Wu** is an Author Assistant. She has several published articles and is currently hosting a monthly podcast entitled [The Cappuccino Breeze Monthly Tips](#). You can contact her at [www.theyppublishing.com](http://www.theyppublishing.com).

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### Article by [Joel Friedlander](#)

Joel Friedlander is a self-published author, a book designer and blogs about book design, self-publishing and the indie publishing life at [TheBookDesigner.com](#). He's also the proprietor of Marin Bookworks, where he helps publishers and authors who decide to publish get to market on time and on budget with books that are both properly constructed and beautiful to read.

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Cyrus [September 3, 2010 at 10:48 am](#)

That is great to know there is something out there.

[Reply](#)



DiDi LeMay [September 3, 2010 at 10:49 am](#)

Great article!

[Reply](#)



[Joel Friedlander](#) [September 3, 2010 at 11:24 am](#)

Thanks Cyrus, and thank you DiDi. The fact that there were Virtual Author Assistants was a surprise to me, but I can see how a service like Yvonne's could be pretty helpful. Thanks for stopping by.

[Reply](#)



[Marilyn Garshowitz](#) [September 4, 2010 at 4:56 am](#)

Great article!

As a self-published author I know the challenges presented and it is imperative to have assistance. One just cannot do it all alone.

I can attest to Yvonne's committed efforts to give the authors the help they need.

Marilyn Garshowitz  
Author of The Brutal Truth

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[Gary Hirons](#) [September 4, 2010 at 10:26 am](#)

As someone who has worked with Yvonne in the past, I can vouch for her professionalism and integrity.

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[Joel Friedlander](#) [September 4, 2010 at 11:02 pm](#)

Marilyn and Gary, that's great to hear from people who know Yvonne personally, thanks for your contribution.

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