

LEGAL EAGLE: GETTING PUBLISHED

Andrew Foley Jones is a director of Mackenzie Jones Solicitors and Concept For Living's legal expert. He tells about the drama of the final stages of editing his first novel.

3.00am: Beyond the distant drone of a plane idling overhead, a tin can rattling along an alley somewhere, a siren, a car horn – checking through the final proof of my first work of fiction (*Seductive Amoebae*) that needs to be emailed to Timothy Finch at the publishers somewhere in the United States of America.

7.00am: Another espresso and I approach the final few pages, adding a couple of semi colons and page breaks and some spelling mistake and reaching that point I never thought would be reached: the final proof is at last concluded.

8.00am: I save the attachment, tentatively press the send button and watch my life's work drift electronically across the Atlantic, across time zones, cultures and new expectations.

9.00am: Another espresso (my fourth/fifth?) and a missed call on my mobile, which has been silenced during the early hours to assist my waning concentration: it is the voice of Richard, the web designer.

"Call me urgently. I repeat: call me urgently."

I dial his number. It rings out. There is no answer service.

I phone again. He answers: "Your domain name."

"What about it?" I ask.

"Somebody has stolen your domain name."

The intention had been to register various domains covering my name and the title of the novel: Andrewfoleyjones.com, andrewfoleyjones.co.uk, seductivamoebae.com and seductiveamoebae.co.uk.

On dealing with the formalities, the designer discovered the names were no longer available. I feel violated, agitated almost. I work through the history of cases stored somewhere in the void of my head. After another espresso, I recall a case I dealt with some years ago involving a magpie of a man who at the conception of the e-commerce boom, registered a number of domain names using the company names of established corporations such as Marks & Spencer and the like. On a lesser scale somebody has emulated such electronic pilfering in relation to a far lesser corporation – that is me.



It appears that the pilferer was somebody who intended unsuccessfully to carry out the design of the website for the book and had rather entrepreneurially chosen to register the domain names himself. I find out who the culprit is and send a friendly shot across his bow: "Give me back my domain names or else," is what it says, more or less – in legal speak.

In the interim, I confess there is some collective perspiration gathering about my brow; what with the book about to go to print. Press releases on editors desks, deadlines looming, promotional material about to go to press – all branded with the domain names that are now in hands of someone else. Two days cluttered by a barrage of electronic communication, exchanged in cyberspace and I receive the wondrous news that it has been agreed that the domain names are to be returned to their rightful owner, yours truly.

I make the necessary calls and the marketing machine goes back into full flight. Next on the agenda, a photo shoot and the photographer with the unenviable task of choosing a suitable pose to include on the reverse cover of the novel. Scanning through the portfolio we agree on the shot (many thanks to Jennie Musgrove and Eleri Griffiths for making me look half human).

This is followed by a frenzied couple of days agreeing the final edit of the all-important cover. After hundreds of emails and telephone calls, the final proof is agreed together with the edit of the narrative to be included on the reverse. At last the first print run of the debut novel is about to begin with the first edition now rolling off the press.

Andrew Foley Jones is a solicitor at Mackenzie Jones Solicitors who have offices in St Asaph, Prestatyn and Chester. His first novel, *Seductive Amoebae*, will shortly be available at all good bookshops. For a first edition please click onto the prized domain name: andrewfoleyjones.com