

## **New Digital Communities Create Opportunities for Diverse and Non-Traditional YA Texts**

Although much has been lost with the decline of the traditional book trade, the forms of publishing and promotion that have arisen to fill the void have created new opportunities for non-traditional authors and brought unprecedented freedom for text creators who break genre boundaries and include diverse ranges of characters. Self-publishing in concert with the digital landscape created by social media, allows authors to be uncompromising and unapologetic over their inclusion of material that would have prevented their publication within the old system.

The emergence of digital reading communities of young readers working together to discover, critique, and then promote or destroy these new texts has further encouraged the creation of diverse, non-traditional texts.

In this paper, I will be discussing how emerging publishing formats and YA digital reading communities affected the distribution, reception, and ultimate success of Nora Sakovic's *All For The Game* series. The first book in the series, *The Foxhole Court* was published in 2013 through Create Space, an independent publishing company that connects authors with Amazon to sell their books. Sakavic used social media outlets including Twitter, Tumblr, Amazon, Goodreads and Youtube to promote her book. She created a presence on these websites, continually answered fan questions, interacted with fan-created content and became associated with popular book bloggers. In this way, Sakavic was able to communicate directly with her readers which resulted in a legion of enthusiastic fans who promoted the story from blog to blog, and screen to screen.

The success of *The Foxhole Court* is especially significant because the book includes characters whose stories are traditionally excluded from mainstream YA literature, including queer youth, people of color, and foster children. It tackles difficult topics such as child abuse, sexual consent, and broken families. The book floats between the disparate genres of sports drama, crime drama, and queer fiction. Since Sakavic was self-published she didn't have to concern herself about making her story marketable or finding an audience. In the new digital landscape, her audience found her.