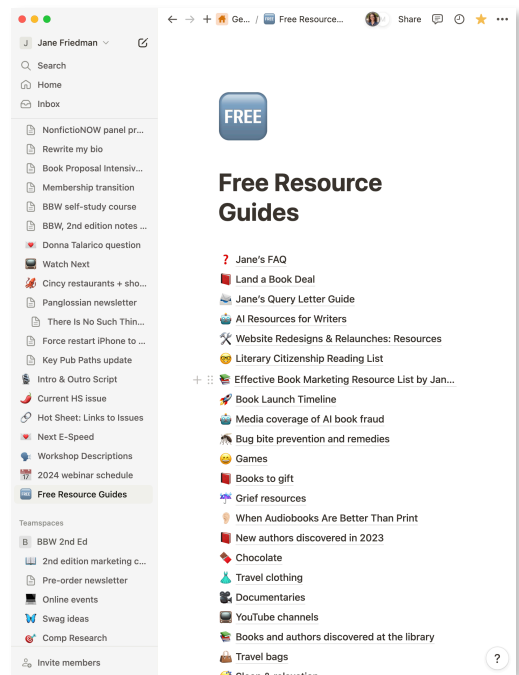


Powerful Digital Tools for Writers

I've been a full-time freelancer since 2014, and I make my living primarily by selling my work and services online (paid newsletters, online classes). Here are the tools that have been indispensable to building and maintaining my business.

Notion

Once upon a time I used Evernote, but since mid-2019, I've switched to Notion for to-do lists, writing drafts, and information I need to store for day-to-day business. Notion syncs automatically across all devices (desktop, laptop, phone, tablet). Every day I use it for quick drafting—for blog posts, research notes, interviews, and conference talk outlines. Form responses and other pieces of information that I use frequently get stored in Notion for easy copy-pasting into email. Writers will find it useful for composting ideas, quotes, and book excerpts that might come in handy later. If you're the kind of person who has a million stickies on your desktop, or multiple documents where you're dumping notes (then find it



hard to locate what you're looking for), then take a serious look at Notion. It's free to start.

Visit <http://notion.so>

There are many competitors to consider. Mac users may want to look at Bear Notes (<https://bear.app/>); OneNote would be my fallback if I were an PC/Android user. Obsidian is also excellent.

Thunderbird

Thunderbird is a free email client that's comparable to Outlook or Gmail. I've never liked Outlook or Gmail, though, so I've long used other solutions for reading and sending email.

My email is tied to my website domains, and I have multiple email addresses. I've also had the same email addresses for 15+ years, and I need a tool that can effectively manage the thousands upon thousands of emails and contacts I've accumulated over the years. Thunderbird fits the bill without being a drag on my system.

Visit <http://thunderbird.net>

ChatGPT (paid version)

As far as generative AI goes, ChatGPT is the most bland of all AIs that I've tried, but I use it for many different purposes—mainly copywriting and brainstorming—and it keeps getting better. Sometimes I will also use Google Notebook LM.

Visit <https://openai.com/index/chatgpt/>

Acuity Scheduling

Acuity is a full-featured appointment and scheduling service that allows anyone to book free or paid appointments with you. No more back-and-forth emailing to set up appointment times, and it hooks into availability on your Google calendar (among others). Acuity can be embedded into your site or shared as a link. I use Acuity integrated into Zoom so that I don't even have to contact clients with a meeting link; it's automatically sent with their booking confirmation email. You can start using Acuity for free, but you'll have to pay around \$15/month for the most useful features.

Visit <http://acuityscheduling.com>

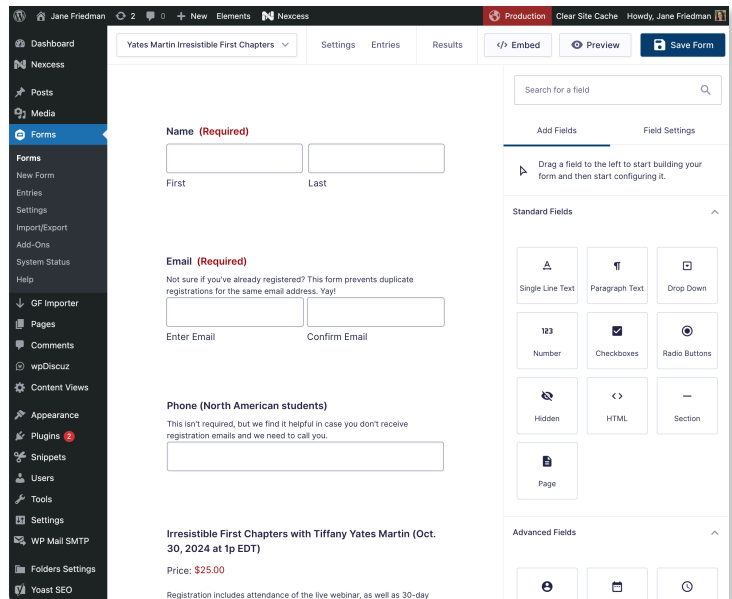
A competitor to consider:

Calendly: <http://calendly.com/>

Gravity Forms

My main website (janefriedman.com) is built using Wordpress, and I've chosen *not* to make it a full ecommerce website. That's because I don't need a shopping cart or fully featured solution such as WooCommerce or Shopify. Instead, I use a premium (paid) Wordpress plugin, Gravity Forms, to set up registration forms or client submittal forms with payment options (Stripe, Square, PayPal, and others).

Visit <http://gravityforms.com>



The screenshot shows the Gravity Forms editor interface. On the left is a dark sidebar with a menu including Dashboard, Nexcess, Posts, Media, Forms (highlighted), New Form, Entries, Settings, Import/Export, Add-ons, System Status, Help, GF Importer, Pages, Comments, wpDiscuz, Content Views, Appearance, Plugins, Snippets, Users, Tools, Settings, WP Mail SMTP, Folders Settings, and Yoast SEO. The main area displays a form titled 'Yates Martin Irresistible First Chapters' with the following fields:

- Name (Required)**: Two input boxes labeled 'First' and 'Last'.
- Email (Required)**: A note 'Not sure if you've already registered? This form prevents duplicate registrations for the same email address. Yay!' followed by two input boxes labeled 'Enter Email' and 'Confirm Email'.
- Phone (North American students)**: A note 'This isn't required, but we find it helpful in case you don't receive registration emails and we need to call you.' followed by one input box.

At the bottom of the form, it says 'Irresistible First Chapters with Tiffany Yates Martin (Oct. 30, 2024 at 1p EDT)' and 'Price: \$25.00'. A small note at the very bottom states 'Registration includes attendance of the live webinar, as well as 30-day'. On the right side, there is a search bar, 'Add Fields' and 'Field Settings' tabs, a drag-and-drop area with the instruction 'Drag a field to the left to start building your form and then start configuring it.', and a grid of field types: Single Line Text, Paragraph Text, Drop Down, Number, Checkboxes, Radio Buttons, Hidden, HTML, Section, and Page. Below this is an 'Advanced Fields' section with three icons.

Zapier

I use Zapier in connection to Gravity Forms. Whenever anyone completes a form at my site, I can automate additional tasks, such as registering that person for a webinar or adding them to an email list. Free to start.

Visit <http://zapier.com>

Zoom

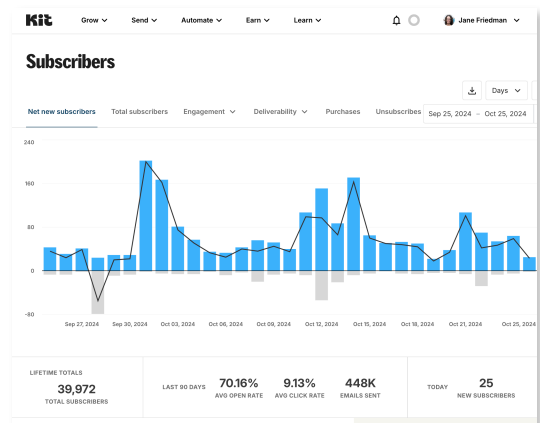
The pandemic taught everyone the value of Zoom. Since 2015, I've used the pro plan (\$149/year) for client meetings, interviews for reporting, and panel discussions. I've found it nearly foolproof since participants can join on any device—or dial in by phone and use audio only. I pay for the webinar upgrade to power my online classes.

Visit: <http://zoom.us>

Kit (formerly known as ConvertKit)

There is no one-size-fits-all email marketing service, and I've used three since 2014. I started with Mailchimp, switched to ActiveCampaign because I wanted some light CRM functionality, but within a couple years moved again, to ConvertKit. ConvertKit is more expensive than the popular MailerLite (used by many authors), but it's more powerful from a marketing and automation perspective. If you're shopping for an email marketing service, I'd compare MailerLite and ConvertKit.

Visit <http://convertkit.com>



Canva

I use this for creating social media images as well as online marketing and promotional images (like for classes). I've always been able to get by with the free version.

Visit <http://canva.com>

1Password

1Password is a password manager that helps ensure you never forget a password again or use bad password hygiene. It generates strong passwords and stores your login credentials, securely and locally; whenever you go to a site that requires those credentials, it autofills them for you on a browser.

Visit: <https://1password.com/>

Competitors to consider: Bitwarden (free)

Google Drive

I use Google Drive as my cloud storage system. It is particularly helpful for documents that I collaborate on, where multiple people edit and access the files alongside me. I also use Google Drive for storing and sharing PDF handouts or similar public links at conferences and events. Free to start.

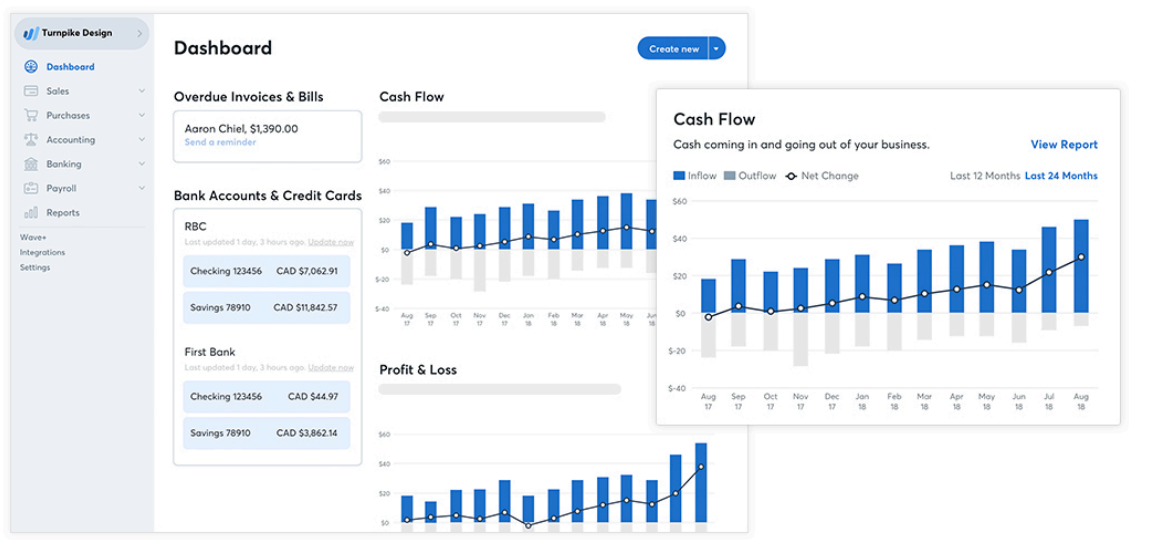
Visit <http://drive.google.com>

Popular alternative: Dropbox: <http://dropbox.com>

Wave

Wave is an affordable in-the-cloud accounting service that tracks income and expenses related to your business. All of my bank accounts are hooked into my Wave account, so I can see the entirety of my financial situation at a glance. It also generates invoices that clients can pay online by credit card and has payroll services if you need them. Accountants can be granted access to your profile in Wave. Wave has some other features helpful for small businesses, such as payroll and business banking accounts.

Visit <http://waveapps.com>



Scrivener

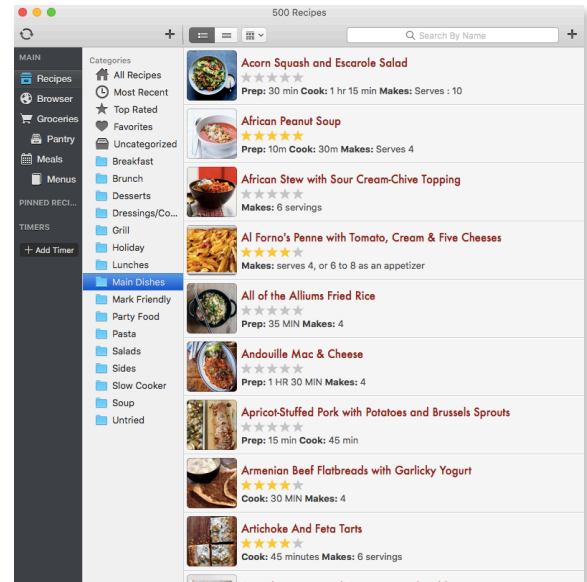
Yes, I'm a Scrivener user—it's the only software I'll ever use for drafting book-length work. There's really no contest in my mind, especially if you're a nonfiction writer. While there's a learning curve, you can find many quick, 30-minute tutorials free on YouTube to get you up and running.

Visit <https://www.literatureandlatte.com/scrivener/overview>

Paprika

On a more personal note: the paid Paprika app is where I store all my recipes. It helps me meal plan during the week, generate shopping lists, and categorize recipes according to my own criteria.

Visit <http://paprikaapp.com>



Thank you!

Thank you so much for subscribing to my email newsletter, Electric Speed. Every two weeks I share new digital tools and resources—like those above—in addition to reader recommendations.

If you spotted any out-of-date information in this document, or have other feedback, please let me know. Reach out to hello@janefriedman.com.