

Story Pitch Management System (SPMS)

1 Overview

The purpose of the Story Pitch Management System is to provide an organized pipeline for story pitches so that more new and creative stories can be given the opportunity to be published. The current system relies on email communication, which slows down the process and leaves some story pitches lost in the clutter and delayed by weeks or even months. There is no standard method of tracking this process, allowing many authors who are less persistent to then fall through the cracks.

1.1 Business Rules

An author can only have a limited amount of approved stories pending through the company. The number of stories they can be working on at one time depends on the type of story they have; each type has a certain “weight” which can add up to a maximum number of allotted “points.” With a maximum of 100, novels are each worth 50, novellas are 25 points, short stories are worth 20 points, and articles are worth 10 points. If an author tries to submit a pitch for a story for which they do not have sufficient points, the pitch will not be submitted and will instead be “on hold” so that the author can re-submit at a later date when they do have sufficient points.

2 Complete the Story Pitch form

An author must include the following information when submitting a story pitch: basic author information, tentative story title, tentative completion date, story type (based on length), genre, tag line, and detailed description. They may also optionally include attachments regarding any research or images related to the story, as well as .msg (Outlook Email) files that feature any discussion with any of our agents or with external sources (especially in the case of non-fiction, research-based works). There should also be a field that

calculates whether they currently have enough points to submit the request or if it will instead be saved for later submission (as described above).

2.1 Business Rules

Story types are pulled from a reference table, as well as genres. The story type reflects how many “points” the author will have available while the story is pending, as explained above, as well as determines the final story approval process. The genre will affect whom the story will be managed by, as each genre has a group of editors with specialization in that genre.

3 Assistant Editor Approval

An assistant in the relevant genre committee will have to approve the story pitch. They can request more information from the author if they would like before approving or rejecting the pitch.

3.1 Business Rules

If denied, the assistant will need to provide a reason to the author. If the assistant takes too long to approve the pitch, it should be labelled as “high priority” for the assistant. “High priority” pitches must be accepted or rejected before their other pitches can be reviewed. If the relevant genre committee does not have any assistant editors, this step will be skipped.

4 General Editor Approval

An editor who is NOT in the relevant genre committee must then approve the story pitch. This is to help prevent bias from those within a genre committee so that fresh and creative ideas can be introduced. They can request more information from the author OR from the assistant editor who approved the pitch if they would like before approving or rejecting the pitch.

4.1 Business Rules

If denied, the editor will need to provide a reason to the author. If the editor takes too long to approve the pitch, it should be labelled as “high priority” for the editor. “High priority” pitches must be accepted

or rejected before their other pitches can be reviewed.

5 Senior Editor Approval

A senior editor from the relevant genre committee will then need to approve the pitch. They can request more information from any of the individuals who have approved the pitch before approving or rejecting it if they would like. They also have the ability to change the tentative title, tag line, or completion date.

5.1 Business Rules

If the senior editor changes any information from the pitch, the author should be notified and have the opportunity to either approve the changes or cancel the pitch. If the senior editor takes too long to approve the pitch, it should be labelled as “high priority” for them and shown at the top of the list of pitches that require approval, but this should not prevent them from reviewing other pitches.

6 Completed Story Upload

Once the author’s pitch is fully approved and they have completed a draft of the story, they must submit the completed draft to be proofread. The draft will be proofread and approved by a variable number of individuals depending on the story type (length).

6.1 Final Approval Process

If any changes are requested, the author will be notified and the story will then remain pending until they submit an updated draft. For articles, the story draft will need to be approved only by the senior editor. For short stories, the draft will need to be approved by the senior editor and at least one other editor from the relevant genre committee. For novellas and novels, the draft will need to be approved by a majority of editors in the genre committee.

6.2 Business Rules

The draft should only be viewable by the author and individuals within the relevant genre committee, as well as the editor who was not in the committee who approved the pitch.

7 Miscellaneous

Editors can be in multiple genre committees - they are not necessarily limited to just one. A genre committee will have at least three editors and at least one senior editor with a maximum of two senior editors per committee.