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Workshop Checklist: Beyond the AI Prompt

How to Use Google AI as a Launchpad, Not a Finish Line

Conducting Search

Enter phrase into Google search bar: (Your Genre) Reader Persona (example: cozy mystery reader persona)

Fiction authors: Do two primary searches: one with your genre described in its secular version (e.g., cozy mystery), the second with the word Christian added to your genre. Compare results.

Nonfiction: Put the word Christian in your primary search since it may be hard to find a secular counterpart for comparison (e.g., devotionals). Some genres may be appropriate for secular/Christian search (e.g., self-help).

Analysis will appear in the AI Overview section at the top of the search results page.

Next Steps

Step 1: Use AI to Build the Skeleton (The Launchpad)

AI is a powerful tool for summarizing broad trends and organizing your initial thoughts. Use it to get a quick overview of your target market.

- **Ask for the "Why":** Don't just accept a persona profile. Ask the AI: *"What specific behaviors, motivations, or demographic shifts led you to this conclusion?"*
- **Find the Sub-Genres:** Ask the AI to break down the broader market into niches (e.g., *"What are the demographic differences between a culinary cozy reader and a paranormal cozy reader?"*).
- **Identify the Gaps:** Ask the AI what the genre is currently *missing* or what tropes readers are starting to find tired.

Step 2: Force the AI to Name Its Sources (The Bridge)

AI models summarize vast amounts of data, but they can occasionally hallucinate or oversimplify. Make the AI point you toward real-world data.

- **Ask for Organizations:** Prompt the AI: *"What specific publishing houses, trade organizations, or market research firms track this data?"*

- **Ask for Reports:** Prompt the AI: *"What are the names of industry reports or white papers that validate these findings?"*
- **Verify Real-World Existence:** Take the names of the organizations and reports the AI gives you and look them up on a standard search engine to ensure they are real, active, and reputable.

Step 3: Conduct Independent Human Research (The Deep Dive)

Now, step away from the AI. Validate the AI's theories by observing and interacting with real people in the publishing ecosystem.

- **Audit the Review Sections:** Go to Amazon or Goodreads for the top 5 books in your genre. Read the **3-star and 4-star reviews**. (1-star reviews are often trolls; 5-star reviews are often super-fans. 3 and 4-star reviews tell you exactly what regular readers love and what disappointed them).
- **Stalk the Digital Hangouts:** Join Facebook groups, subreddits, or Instagram hashtags dedicated to your genre. Do not market your book; just quietly observe what questions readers ask, what memes they share, and what bugs them.
- **Interview a Gatekeeper:** Visit your local independent bookstore or library. Ask the clerk or librarian: *"Who actually comes in and checks out these books? What do they complain about? What do they wish they could find more of?"*

Step 4: Filter Through Your Worldview & Calling (The Finish Line)

Data tells you what *has* been done, but it cannot tell you what *should* be written.

- **Check for Truth:** Ensure your market strategy is built on verified, truthful data, honoring both your audience and your stewardship as a writer.
 - **Inject the "Unique Spark":** AI only knows the past. Use your original research to find the market gaps where your unique voice, faith, and creativity can provide something fresh.
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