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*Feature article***Using Scrivener to Publish and Flourish**

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“Publish or perish” describes the pressure academics endure to publish in order to further their careers. Though publish or perish is a persistent problem, academics have made a call for re-envisioning a world where we can publish and flourish. One useful writing tool that can help researchers do this is Scrivener, an application that has helped many writers of various genres, including fiction and non-fiction. The purpose of this paper is to present five of its basic features and their corresponding benefits: writing history, a binder, a threaded corkboard, an outliner, and revision mode. Then, I relate these benefits to the Fogg Behavior Model to illustrate how the user can become a more productive and, potentially, more successful writer.

**Key words:** Scrivener, publish or perish, writing motivation, Fogg Behavioural Model.

Publish or perish describes the pressure to publish that academics face in order to further their careers. An academic's publication record is one factor that influences not only hiring (Kimura, 2023) but also contract renewal, tenure, and promotion decisions (Brandon, 1996). Publishing is a time-consuming practice, be it for scholarly writing for work, or creative writing for pleasure. This is a problem because it detracts from lesson planning, a language teacher's most important task (Webb & Nation, 2012), and teaching (Brandon, 1996). Adding to academics' pressure is demands from universities for both quantity (e.g., the number of publications) and quality (e.g., in prestigious journals with high impact factors). Under these circumstances, many academics look for tools to facilitate their writing tasks, and in this article, I aim to introduce one such tool called Scrivener. While the focus of the article is to help the reader get started in using Scrivener, I will frame my discussion in terms of how specific features of Scrivener address writer motivation and habits. To prepare the reader for this discussion, I begin with a brief discussion of motivation and an overview of the Fogg Behavior

Model (FBM), which can help academics manage pressure from the threat of publish or perish. Then, a longer and more substantive section on Scrivener will follow, where I describe five features of Scrivener and how they foster writing motivation as described by the FBM.

**Fogg Behavior Model**

According to self-determination theory, we can describe motivation as extrinsic or intrinsic (Deci & Ryan, 2011). Extrinsic motivation is a person's desire to do something because of the outcome. Many educators might feel extrinsic motivation to publish because publishing means keeping their jobs or furthering their careers. On the other hand, when people perform an activity merely for the sake of enjoyment, the motivation is likely to be intrinsic (Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 1989). For example, some researchers may enjoy simply sharing their ideas with others in the discourse community, whether or not their institution requires publications.

Although academics tend to more commonly receive extrinsic motivation to publish from their

employers, it would be ideal if we could be intrinsically motivated and thus enjoy writing for the sake of it. Of course, motivation is not necessarily wholly extrinsic or intrinsic. However, in a perfect world in which academics can publish and flourish (Yeo et al., 2021) without their livelihoods being threatened, motivation would, in theory, become increasingly intrinsic.

Unfortunately, the extrinsic motivation from the institution is not always sufficient to encourage an academic to foster a habit of sitting down to write regularly. One more drawback of extrinsic motivation is that it can feel superficial. Yet, people who enjoy the challenge of playing video games are motivated by earning points (Ryan et al., 2006), even though points have no tangible value. I am motivated by the promised reward of a small piece of chocolate when I have enjoyed a successful writing session, and the chocolate is an arbitrary reward I have decided to give myself after spending even 20 minutes on (mostly) daily writing. Earning points in a video game or chocolate after a successful writing session are compelling extrinsic motivations and prompt us to want to work harder, even though these motivations are short-lived (Mekler, 2015) and superficial.

Nevertheless, motivation, be it extrinsic or intrinsic, is not always sufficient to push us in the direction of doing tasks that serve our interests. Like people who enjoy jogging have a hard time getting out the door, academics who actually want to write cannot always easily summon up the necessary motivation. The Fogg Behavior Model (FBM) (Fogg, 2009, 2020) can guide us toward positive writing behaviors, which is easy as A, B, and C. These writing behaviors are followed by good feelings, not the other way around. In the FBM, A stands for anchor. An anchor is an existing habit, i.e., a prompt, that reminds us to engage in the new desired behavior. For example, after we brush our teeth, we are reminded to floss. B stands for behavior, i.e., the new desired behavior, such as flossing. C stands for celebration, which capitalizes on behaviorism. When we perform a new habit, we must remember to celebrate by smiling or saying a few words of praise to ourselves. The celebration is a form of positive reinforcement. I illustrate examples of the ABCs of the FBM in the following table:

**Table 1***Explanation and Examples of the ABCs of the FBM*

Element	Explanation	My example with writing	Additional example
Anchor	Existing routine that occurs regularly.	Scheduled writing time arrives	I see my running gear in the kitchen when I come downstairs in the morning
Behavior	Simple version of new desired habit	Write for 25 minutes	I put it on and head out the door for a run
Celebration	Something done to foster positive emotions	Enjoy a piece of Andes Chocolate	I smile to myself as soon as I get home from my run

**Note.** Adapted from *Tiny Habits* by B. J. Fogg, 2020.

According to the FBM, for a behavior to occur, there are three necessary conditions: motivation, a prompt, and either ease of the behavior or ability of the individual (Fogg, 2009, 2020). The acronym MAP makes these elements easy to remember: motivation, ability, and prompt. For the sake of clarity, I will refer to ability as ease/ability. Motivation is not the best way, or even the only way, to spur a behavior (Fogg, 2009, 2020; McGonigal, 2015). What is worse, motivation is not only unreliable but also fickle (Fogg, 2020). Motivation to write might be high on one day and low on the next.

Fortunately, motivation alone is less critical to success than previously thought (McGonigal, 2015). More so than motivation, prompts and ease/ability have a stronger influence over whether or not we engage in a behavior (Fogg, 2020). By modifying prompts, we can rely less on motivation, which is unpredictable (Clear, 2018). Therefore, though academics have extrinsic motivation to publish from their institutions, writing may not come easily, or

prompts may be necessary to encourage us to sit at our desks to begin work. From this point of view of behavioral psychology, Scrivener can help circumvent such problems by leveraging motivation and increasing the ease/ability with which we write in order to engage more in writing. Because Scrivener offers features and corresponding benefits not found in other word processing programs, it can positively influence academics' writing behaviors and, therefore, foster an environment in which we not merely publish or perish but, ideally, publish and flourish. In this paper, I will elaborate on five features and corresponding benefits of Scrivener that can support academic writers and illustrate how these benefits support two of the three aspects of the FBM: motivation and ease/ability. Before doing so, however, let me first start with a brief overview of Scrivener.

### **Scrivener to the rescue!**

Many fiction and non-fiction writers use Scrivener, an inexpensive word-processing program developed and sold by Literature & Latte. As of December 2023, the standard license costs ¥8820, and the educational license costs ¥7479. Upon purchase, writers may use the subscription indefinitely. After installing the software, the user can import a manuscript from Google Docs, for example, though this may be slightly time-consuming and cumbersome. This is because the user might sometimes have to redo formatting or paste in comments one by one. Also, common word processing applications such as Microsoft Word, Pages for Mac, or Google Docs are typically single documents. On the other hand, one useful feature of Scrivener is its folder-based structure. Therefore, texts written using Microsoft Word or Google Docs may have to be split and then saved to Scrivener. For these reasons, I would not recommend introducing Scrivener to undergraduates because the learning curve might not make learning the software worthwhile. Writers would be better off starting a new project in Scrivener rather than importing one that is already underway. In other words, the software is more suitable for new projects than existing ones, which means that it might be appropriate for students at the graduate level, because they have to begin larger writing projects, such as dissertations, than they did as undergraduates.

Conversely, however, once work on the manuscript has progressed, the user can export a manuscript from Scrivener to other standard formats, including .docx or PDF, should the need arise, such as

when sending the manuscript out to collaborators or editors who do not use the software. Furthermore, instead of sending an entire project, the user can select which folders (i.e., files) to export and exclude research notes, for example. Though there are only Windows, Mac, and iOS versions of Scrivener, this is a sufficient number of platforms; therefore, many researchers and other writers can run the software. Two versions lacking are Linux and more notably, Android. The lack of an Android version means that Scrivener cannot be installed onto tablets other than iPads. One other problem is that users need to purchase a separate license for each of them. In addition, while collaborators can work simultaneously on Google Docs or Microsoft Word, online collaborating with Scrivener poses challenges, as files can only be saved to Dropbox, which may lead to problems with synchronization or worse, data loss.

Another caveat worth pointing out is that although writers can use Scrivener for article-length manuscripts, it is more suitable for books or dissertations. According to testimonials on the developer's website (Literature & Latte, n.d.), Scrivener is popular among novelists and other writers. Longer manuscripts are more suitable for Scrivener because word counts for each section appear by clicking on the folder in the binder on the left of the screen. Tracking the word count for each section is more critical for book-length manuscripts than for articles because writers often need to be mindful of the balance of the word count among the chapters. However, even for an article such as this one, which was written using Scrivener, tracking the word count of each section is helpful for overall writer motivation, and it helps see the overall balance among sections. I will explain more about the word count feature and its accompanying benefits later.

### **Getting Started with Scrivener**

The opening screen of Scrivener looks like any other word processor; for example, it includes a toolbar, an editor, an inspector, and a format bar, which is analogous to the formatting toolbar in Word. However, Scrivener has one feature that other word processors do not have: a binder. These five elements comprise the main aspects of the Scrivener interface. Three elements of the binder that are of most use to researchers are the main content, research, and notes.

The Scrivener editor looks like that of any other word processor. It is the space in which the user types.

One feature of the editor is that it allows the user to split the screen and view two sections simultaneously: side by side or one above the other. In terms of the FBM, this addresses the ease/ability aspect because it helps the writer compare sections when checking for consistency, such as parallel structure, by which I mean keeping ideas in the same order as presented throughout the manuscript.

The user can also list references in the designated research folder of the binder and store any other digital references, such as research articles and eBooks, in this folder as well. The research folder is a convenient place to keep reference materials, eliminating the need for reference management software, such as Mendeley or Zotero. Keeping references within Scrivener provides a more seamless and, therefore, easier way of working so that the user does not need to look up other files in a separate folder. Like other word processors, Scrivener can format references according to most common styles, such as APA, MLA, or Chicago, which also fosters ease of writing. Similarly, the notes folder provides users with a convenient place to store notes to themselves without creating a cluttered manuscript, as the comment function of Word tends to do. Scrivener does have a comment function, but it is better suited for communicating with others who read and comment on the manuscript. Furthermore, in most other word processing programs, though, comments cannot easily be moved around in the document. Also, the user needs to highlight the text, which causes the manuscript to become more cluttered.

### Features and Benefits

Scrivener has many standard features of widely used word processing programs such as a wide selection of fonts, automatic text correction, reference formatting, and spell and grammar checking. However, in addition to standard features of word processing programs, Scrivener offers features with corresponding benefits that can help foster good writing behaviors from the point of view of the FBM. The three elements of the FBM are ease of the behavior, prompts that encourage the behavior, and motivation to engage in the behavior. How can the user leverage the benefits of Scrivener's features? From the point of view of psychology, I will explain how five features and their corresponding benefits can foster positive writing behaviors. I will address the features in the order of most to least powerful. The five features are (a) writing history, (b) a

binder, (c) a (threaded) corkboard, (d) an outliner, and (e) revision mode.

### Writing History

Scrivener's writing history function shows daily and total progress on each project. Writing history statistics include the number of writing days, the average number of words written per day, and word count by day and month. With average word counts, the user can set realistic targets if they choose to aim for a number of words written per day. Writers need to set realistic goals so that we can monitor progress and decide if our approach to the task of writing is effective. According to the FBM, realistic targets are important: we should set the bar low so that even on our worst day, we can achieve something and, therefore, both stay motivated and feel a sense of efficacy (i.e., ease/ability). As we track progress, attain goals, and set new ones, self-efficacy increases, thereby fulfilling the ease/ability criterion of the FBM. We can create a virtuous cycle. Tracking words written per day in Scrivener is less cumbersome and time-consuming than recording in a separate spreadsheet or by some analogue means, such as in a notebook. Should the user be inclined, they can export word count statistics into a .csv file.

Watching a growing writing streak helps to build and, more importantly, sustain extrinsic motivation to work on a project, fulfilling the motivation criterion of the FBM. In addition, monitoring the daily and monthly word counts can confirm if a writing project remains on track to be completed by the deadline. In turn, the awareness of the growing word count thereby also serves as a prompt to continue the behavior of writing. In addition, monitoring word count can sustain motivation when a manuscript grows at a brisk pace and can stoke motivation when writing slows down. In addition to stoking motivation, the unhappy realization that writing is slowing down can serve as a prompt in the FBM to increase the writing pace when a deadline is fast approaching. Finally, watching the running word count can be helpful when writing abstracts or articles, which have strict word limits.

There is one caveat to setting and tracking word count targets: words per day can also be an arbitrary target. Not all writing involves writing. We need to read, discuss, and, most importantly, think about our ideas (Elbow, 1973; Provost, 1972, 2019). Furthermore, we need to consider other quantitative measures of our writing, including word counts or time spent writing, as

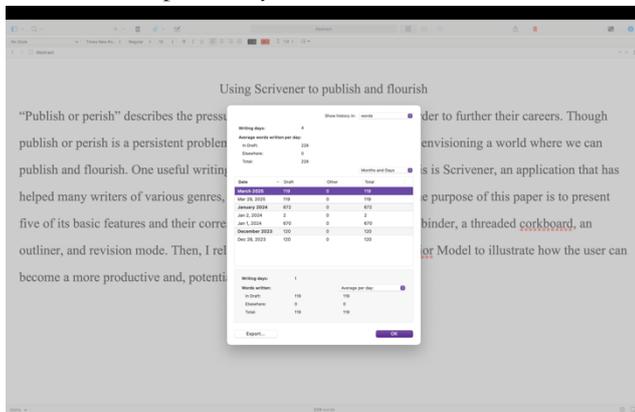
well as qualitative measures, such as coherence and cohesion.

Another benefit of Scrivener's writing history function is that the user can return to previous versions of the manuscript. This is helpful if the writer decides to incorporate an idea previously discarded. Scrivener's writing history function is analogous to Word's undo. In Word, however, the program cannot show changes made to the manuscript after it has last been saved. One workaround in Word is to Save As, but creating and keeping track of several versions can become unwieldy. Scrivener's writing history supports the ease/ability aspect of the FBM.

### Figure 1

#### Writing history.

Screenshot captured by author.



### Outliner

Not all competent writers use outlines. Some people are planners; others are not. Sword (2017) and others (Jenoff, 2013; Ritchie, 2017; Sax, 2013) refer to writing without planning as *pantsing*: writing by the seat of one's pants (Sword, 2017, p. 46) but even such writers can benefit from Scrivener's outliner feature by reverse engineering an outline from a completed first draft (Elbow, 1973; King, 2012; Tully, 2019). Though the user can generate outlines with the binder function and the corkboard, the outliner function of Scrivener allows the user to do this as well.

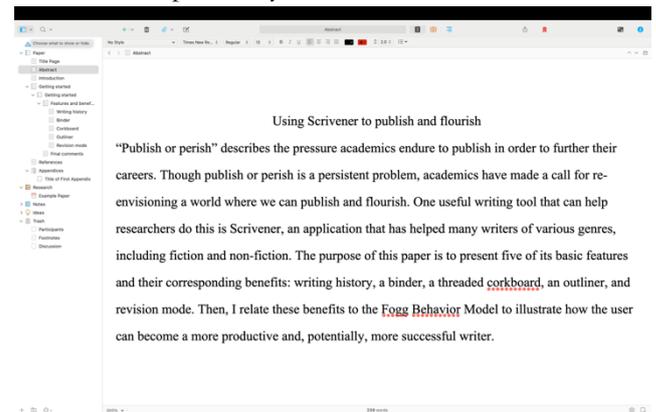
While it is possible to create outlines using standard word processing programs, Scrivener's outliner feature does so much more elegantly. On any word processing program with headings, one can impose a loose outline on a manuscript and watch it gel as the manuscript grows. However, in Scrivener, the user can create folders and subfolders to the left of the page making it easy to see how many words have been written in each section, as well as indicating the balance

of the manuscript and what the outline looks like. As mentioned earlier, the growing word count can help build and sustain motivation, one of the three aspects of the FBM. The gradually emerging outline addresses ease, another aspect of the FBM. In addition, seeing the way in which sections of a manuscript relate to one another makes it easier for the user to follow the structure.

### Figure 2

#### Outliner.

Screenshot captured by author.



### Binder

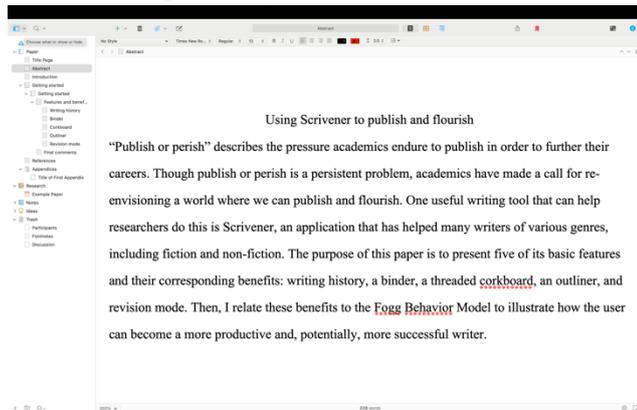
On the left of the screen, there is a binder which contains folders and subfolders. The user can split the manuscript into folders, which represent a section or chapter of the manuscript. In terms of the FBM, the binder function addresses the ease/ability aspect and benefits the user because the outline is easy to see and manage. For pantsers (i.e., writers who do not plan, but fly by the seat of their pants), the emerging outline works as a kind of reverse outline, which is easy to see at a glance. The user can also manipulate the outline by dragging and dropping folders in order to rearrange the outline or structure of the manuscript. When exporting to another format, writers can preserve the binder function by indicating page breaks where one folder or subfolder ends and the next begins. Exporting to other allows for ease of sharing and collaborating.

Furthermore, working piecemeal by breaking a manuscript down into sections makes the sometimes-daunting task of writing more manageable. Committing to writing one specific section in a session feels more manageable than committing to writing some nebulous and less quantifiable portion. In addition, watching the outline of the manuscript unfold while writing also addresses the ease/ability aspect of the FBM.

### Figure 3

*Binder view.*

Screenshot captured by author.



### Corkboard

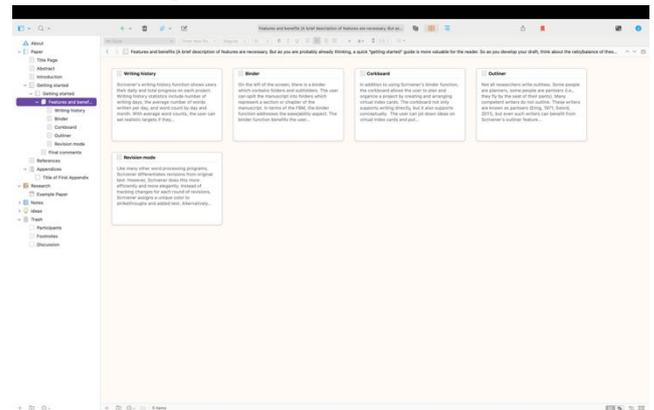
The corkboard function supports writers conceptually. It allows the user to plan and organize a project by creating and arranging virtual index cards. The user can jot down ideas on the cards and put them on the corkboard. Keeping ideas separate from the main manuscript is helpful when the user is unsure whether to include an idea or where to include it. Index cards are also beneficial for getting down thoughts about planning or about the project that the user does not necessarily need to incorporate into the manuscript. The user can lay out cards in a linear function, which may be helpful to novelists, who need to consider a plotline, or the user can lay cards out freeform, which allows shuffling, making it easier to consider the relationship among ideas.

This function of cross-linking ideas eliminates the need for notetaking programs such as Obsidian, Roam, or Notion, which fulfill the same function. Furthermore, to make the corkboard even more legible and visually appealing, the user may adjust the size of the cards and the space between cards. This ease of planning what to write positively influences the ease/ability aspect of the FBM.

### Figure 4

*Corkboard view.*

Screenshot captured by author.



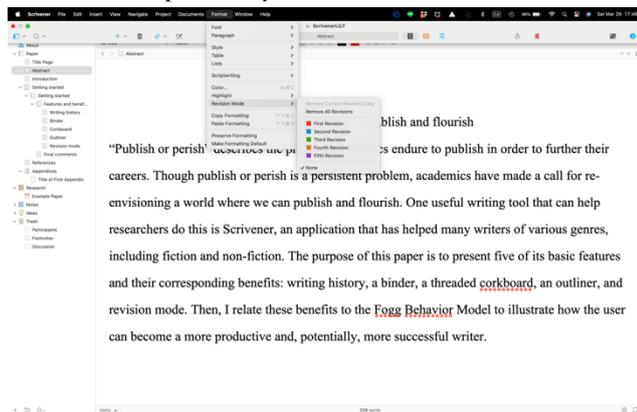
### Revision Mode

Like many other word processing programs, Scrivener differentiates revisions from original text but does so in a more efficient and elegant manner. For up to five rounds of revisions, Scrivener assigns each round of revisions a different colour, allowing the writer to easily track and smoothly make changes in later versions. The colours can be set by default or chosen by the user. Rather than going into review mode, like in other programs, in Scrivener, the user merely needs to delete what they do not wish to keep. Fortunately, deleted text remains in Scrivener's history, so the user can be assured that ideas are not lost forever.

In terms of the FBM, the revision mode and its corresponding benefits address the ease/ability aspect. Furthermore, the different colors of text in each subsequent revised version of the manuscript allow the user to easily distinguish between versions without having to save a new file for every revision, making for less cluttered folders. Not only can writers customize colors of text in revisions, but they can also set Scrivener to appear as a typewriter, so that their manuscript scrolls as they type, thereby allowing the user to look straight ahead, not down. Likewise, when focusing on a particular line, sentence, or paragraph, the user can set Scrivener to dim the surrounding text, thereby allowing the user to focus on the selected portion of text, and thus increasing the ease/ability aspect of writing, according to the FBM.

**Figure 5***Revision mode colors.*

Screenshot captured by author.

**Final Comments**

Living under publish or perish is stressful at best and counterproductive at worst. In this paper, I have highlighted five features of Scrivener and their corresponding benefits, as well as their influence on writing motivation as viewed through the FBM. These five benefits are: (a) writing history, (b) the binder, (c) the (threaded) corkboard, (d) the outliner, and (e) revision mode. Considering how to deal with the publish or perish problem from the point of view of the FBM, we can see how Scrivener might help academic writers in terms of motivation and ease/ability. Because Scrivener cannot provide notifications for users to sit down and write, users must set these up for themselves, considering their own needs. I schedule time with myself to write and book an appointment with myself in my calendar or with another individual on focusmate.com, a free service that pairs up remote workers to work together for a 25-, 50-, or 75-minute block of time. For more on how to use Focusmate, see (Kimura, 2023). Another prompt I use on my work-from-home days is incense. The scent puts me into work mode as I build writing momentum.

Before purchasing the paid version, readers should consider using the free trial version, available for Windows and Mac but not iOS. The trial version comes with all the features of the paid version. The trial version is free for 30 days, and the software need not even be used on 30 consecutive days. Such terms should allow ample time to become familiar with the program and provide enough sessions to complete a small project. In addition, the user can work on the same file across several devices by syncing Scrivener with Dropbox (Literature and Latte, n.d.). If the user should choose to do so, however, it is essential to

remember to save their work so that they will be able to work on the current version the next time they open the program on another device.

In a perfect world, users should be able to use new software intuitively without having to read dense manuals or take crash courses. In reality, however, when getting started, it can take some time to familiarize ourselves with any new program. In other words, there is a learning curve. With Scrivener, it is not too steep. I have not been driven to read any manuals, but by trial and error, I continue to learn about Scrivener's features and benefits. However, online searches, video tutorials, and even asking acquaintances in JALT have helped me to figure out everything I have needed to. In addition, the developer of Scrivener has uploaded their own instructional videos to its website. The developer has also embedded interactive tutorials into the program. Furthermore, in addition to offering videos and tutorials, an instructional eBook is available for ¥2255 through [literatureandlatte.com/store](http://literatureandlatte.com/store), and a Kindle version is available for ¥1652 through [amazon.co.jp](http://amazon.co.jp). There is also a book in the *Dummies* series: *Scrivener for Dummies*. One other problem with the program is that there is only an English version of the program.

I have enjoyed writing this paper using Scrivener, and I hope I have persuaded the reader to consider at least using the trial version. Some of the features that helped me the most included the writing history, binder, and outliner functions. Just as I hope to encourage readers to at least try the trial version of the program, I have conducted workshops highlighting some of its features and benefits. A new pair of running shoes can help an athlete recommit to training for a marathon, and similarly, a new word processor can provide enough novelty to help a writer recommit to writing regularly. I also hope that readers will consider how to apply the FBM to their own writing habits so that they will eventually publish and flourish even more.

The author declares that she has no relationship with Literature & Latte, the developer of Scrivener, nor with Tootsie Roll Industries, producer of Andes Chocolate Mints, and thus, no conflict of interest.

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