



British-Based Author Takes Tour Online

By Kimberly Maul

Technology has allowed authors a variety of ways to interact with fans: personal websites and blogs, live chats, book videos and virtual author tours that take the author to literary websites and blogs. Gabriella Goddard, a first-time author living in London, decided to combine all these ideas for her Virtual Author Tour. Though others in the U.S. have taken virtual author tours to new levels, Goddard claims she is the first of its kind in the U.K.

After "nursing my blistered feet at the end of a very harrowing day of talks and signings," she said, the suggestion from her agent "was music to my ears." The author of *Gulp! The Seven-Day Crash Course to Master Fear and Break Through Any Challenge* organized Q&As, podcasts, digital radio interviews, videocasts and live online chats - all to happen during a one-week span. "While many authors do blog book tours, and others do podcasts, very few actually incorporate them all into one integrated tour," Goddard told The Book Standard. "With millions of people going online for 'social networking,' it makes sense for authors to tap into this growing market, plus a Virtual Author Tour is ideal to capture the attention of time starved professionals who can't get away from the office to hear you speak."

Goddard's Virtual Author Tour took place between Aug. 31 and Sept. 4, 2006. She participated in Q&A sessions at pre-arranged blogs and forums, posted video-blogs on YouTube.com, and had live web-chats through MSN Messenger, the Skype internet phone network and the Typepad blogging site. "Publishers are always looking for innovative ways to promote their books and we know that there is a huge scope for reaching a much wider readership online than through print media," said Katy Szita, publicity director at Healthy Penguin. "When Gabriella Goddard suggested undertaking a ground-breaking virtual book tour, we jumped at the chance to get involved."

Gulp! was released in the U.K. in April 2006 and Goddard plans on hosting another virtual author tour in the U.S. in January, when *Gulp!* is expected to be published here. The End

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