Speaker 3: You're listening to AcademiGig, Episode 4. AcademiGig is a podcast for current and aspiring academic creatives, freelancers, and entrepreneurs. Along with every episode, we post show notes with links to resources mentioned in the episode and a full transcript. You can find these materials, sign up for our email list, and share your ideas for episode topics at academigig.com. Now, onto the episode.

Katie: Hey, Sarah. Nice to talk with you again.

Sarah: Hey, Katie. How's it going?

Katie: It is going well. What is up for you and your business this episode?

Sarah: Well, I am thinking a lot about these conversations that we've had recently about different identities in your work, and what are you representing, how are you representing yourself, and how do you talk about the work that you do and things like that. A lot of those really deep-thought experiments have turned into me thinking about revamping my website a little bit, and so I'm wrestling a little bit with different ways to describe the work I'm doing and what I actually want my online presence to look like. That's what I'm mulling with this time around. How about you? What are you wrestling with?

Katie: Well, I had mentioned on the last episode, as our resource to recommend, this course on Rocker Web Design business, and I am smacked up in the middle of it, and I love it. It's super helpful, but it does take time. I really had to set aside some time that typically would've been devoted to other parts of my business to really dig in on some of my professional development for me and for the business. It's been a nice reminder that you need to set aside time for things like reading and taking courses, and also some of your finances as well to invest in those things.

It's been really helpful. It's got videos, and there's also some workbooks that are embedded, and then other documents that are embedded throughout the course that are really helping me to think through similar to you, like the website presence for this particular part of my business, and how to talk with clients about the different kinds of services that we offer, and the kinds of benefits they would get from working with us, so a lot of brain work, but it's really good, really good.

Sarah: Good. Glad to hear it. That segues us very nicely into our topic for today. Do you want to kick it off and describe what we're going to be chatting about today?

Katie: Sure. What we thought we talk about today is how do you have these different identities with your business? It's a little bit splitting off of our previous conversation about full-time work versus side work because, for me, I have a separate set of business cards and resources, and I have a separate website, and things where I need to send people that represent my side business apart from my full-time job. A big reason for that is I work for a state institution, so I have to be really careful that I'm not muddying those waters, but also because we work with different kinds of clients and different kinds of stakeholder groups.

I keynote on a lot of different topics and things. We just might take on different kinds, we might wear different hats with different kinds of clients, and so we thought we dig into that today. Sarah, I'm curious. What are the different kinds of hats you feel like you're wearing with your business?

Sarah: One of the biggest challenges when I first got going here was thinking about all the different things that I could do in the business, and that I wanted to do in the business, and how they all fit together because some of them seemed disparate from one another. If I just list off a few, you might get a sense for how these things are a little bit to put together, so I have the organizational development component or the organizational strategic planning and evaluation and organizational progress kinds of things that I like to do. I like to think of that as the application of my how-to-do research hat, but there's a lot of pieces to that.

There's a lot of things like digital technology, and consulting on social media, or thinking about how do you run a focus group, or what's the best way to get input from your stakeholders. Is it to put out an online survey? It's then developing the online survey and thinking about how to market the online survey. There's a lot of pieces that go into that. Then, on the other side, I have written a book that's called Bridging the Relationship Gap. That's all about the content of my studies in graduate school, so about stress and resilience throughout early childhood. For that side, I do things like go and do speakings and training and professional development opportunities with teachers, and social workers, and others who work with kids and families.

Those two things feel really different sometimes if you think about just audience. Those are two really different audiences. One is professionals who were working with kids and families, or parents, or that sort of thing. The other is organizations. When I think about how do I describe the work that I'm doing, it can get a little challenging because one of the things you're supposed to do is really hone in on your audience. When my audience is sometimes two very different groups of people, it can get a little bit hard to figure out how to describe that, and also figure out what is it that this particular client might be looking for from me.

One of the things that's actually been really helpful in thinking about how do these pieces fit together is that one of the clients that I have right now, they do professional development trainings and those sorts of things, but they also are looking at re-designing some of their online training options. They reached out to me because of the work that I've done on YouTube and other sorts of more public speaking, but also online kinds of things that I've done in the past. They came to me to help them re-design some of these online courses.

That was really a little bit of both end. My content expertise is really helpful in that job, but so is my ability to understand how digital technology works, and to do video, and to think strategically about marketing, and developing content, and those sorts of things, and so it was a nice marrying of those two. Since then, I've been thinking a lot more about how those two different audiences are actually sometimes really overlapping, and that I shouldn't assume that I know what the person I'm talking to is looking for, and that I should, instead, ask questions.

Katie, I'm curious for you, where is the tension in the full-time work versus the part-time work? I know I dealt with that as well when I was working for a university too. I always felt like, okay, which person am I right now? Which business card do I hand out? I'm wondering how you balance that and how you wrestle with those things?

Katie: This is something that I've been super intentional about because I have previously worked for a private institution where it just wasn't as big of a deal. They expected me to do some consulting stuff on the side, and that it would be representing the institution, and that it would be good for everyone's reputation all around. Now that I work for a state institution, the lines are a lot more clear and a lot more delineated. When I first started working at Oregon State, we actually had a series of meetings with various people around the institution with my boss and some other folks to talk about how do we really separate this out in a way that makes sense because the biggest challenge I was facing at that time was my previous job kept me in the same circles professionally as the job I am in right now, but because of the previous work that I did, it was more around teaching and learning, and the work I do right now is more around research on teaching and learning, so it's a little bit different.

There are a lot of people that might run into me at a conference where I'm there on behalf of Oregon State, and Oregon State Ecampus has paid me to be there, but someone approaches me because they know about my previous work, and they want me to do something. That would be part of my side business. It's not like I have, all of a sudden, become a different person. I have the same network. I have the same contacts. That was actually the grayest area for me was when I'm traveling on behalf of Oregon State, how do I really clarify to people that if they want me to have a conversation about that, we need to do it at a different time, and so I did make up different business cards.

The other piece is too, some people know me, through my Oregon State email, and so they'll email me at Oregon State asking me to do something that's my side business. Then, I have to email them back and say, "This is actually something I do on the side. Here's my other email. Let's continue the conversation over there." I know the biggest area of confusion for people has been around my second book, which is around Blended Course Design, which because I now work with online teaching and learning research, people assume, well, that must be tied in with your Oregon State work, but it's not because it's a book that I wrote before I went to Oregon State, and it's consulting that I do apart from Oregon State. I actually am not really involved at all with the blended initiatives at Oregon State. There's a totally different person who does that work.

I have to be very careful when I get contacted through Oregon State channels. Are you contacting me as the director of the research unit here, or are you contacting me because you know I do consulting work about this? I'm just upfront about it. I mean, I just tell people, like, "Here's the situation. If you're contacting me for my consulting work, let's continue in this conversation through my Gmail address, and not through the Oregon State.

Initially, it was a little bit weird, but the more that I've had to deal with it, the easier it's become. I just have to be very clear about would I have any kind of revenue from consulting work, even if it would, in some way, you know, maybe indirectly benefit Oregon State, like if I get added to a national board or something because of the book that I wrote on Blended Course Design, but that national board could have good networking implications for my research job at Oregon State where we to grant writing or whatever it might be. I just have to make sure everybody knows that what I'm doing on Oregon State time and what I'm doing on my own time. I just keep really meticulous records about all these stuff.

Sarah: I think that's really necessary. You raise a great point about working for state institution. There are a lot of rules and regulations, and so, listeners out there, if you have questions about how to do that, it's definitely worth looking into your university's policies about that because some universities have really open policies about you going and doing speaking and training and keeping the speaker stipend. Others, it's much more anything that you're doing related to the work that you do for us, you then have to use that money to go toward salary savings or that sort of thing. Definitely look into your institution's rules about that and get a sense for what kinds of things you need to be tracking and how to be upfront about those things. I think that's great advice, Katie.

Katie: I think it's really important to clarify because I would imagine some of the people listening to this are in a very different position than I am. I am not a faculty member, and that's what make this increasingly complicated is that, because I am not a faculty member, I'm a full-time administrator staff person, I don't have the same protections that a faculty member would have around some of these issues because faculty, at least at my institution, faculty get a lot more leeway with consulting. I don't have that because of the position I'm in. Especially if you're listening to this and you're a faculty member, it is entirely likely that you will have more room to maneuver in this space than I currently do.

Also, an additional layer to that, because of the position I'm in, I don't have the same intellectual property protections that a faculty member would have, so if I write something on behalf of Oregon State, this is true of a book contract we're working on right now, I can't sign that contract and I can't receive those royalties. That's with the institution. It's not with me. This is a reason, and I think it makes more sense to people why I do so much writing on the side, because I want to own the rights to that, and I want to have royalties come from that to come to my business. I've had to be really careful about like this is why I do writing retreats and stuff. I can't write during my Oregon State time and have it be mine. I have to be really careful about that too.

I mean, I'm hoping people listening to this aren't like, "Oh, that's so much logistical work. It's not worth it." Once you get into the groove of it, it's a lot easier to do because you just wear the different hats. You know when you can talk with people and when you can't. I think it becomes easier over time but, at least, initially, it can feel a little bit overwhelming.

Sarah: Yeah, I would agree. I had a similar thing with my book when I was in the midst of writing that. I just had to have conversations with the people at my university about, okay, how does this work, and how do I report this as side income and all of those kinds of things. Just being upfront about that, and really doing your research on the backend to figure out what is the proper way to do this, or what ways ... Could I structure a little bit and ask, you know, say, "Hey, if I do it this way, is that still okay?" Some places will be really flexible, and some won't. It just really depends.

Katie: Yeah. It totally depends. I think that it's not a conversation you should be scared to have, but also I think it's really important to know this could be a good point in your business to bring in some legal counsel on your behalf because your institution will not represent you and they are representing the interest of your institution. If you're starting to have these conversations ... I think I mentioned this in maybe our first episode. This was a big reason why I started my LLC, was to really differentiate in a very formal way the work that I was doing on the side from the work that I do for my institution.

I do want to talk about, Sarah, how we are representing these different hats to different people because, I think, there are so many areas where this comes in. You've mentioned website, I had mentioned business cards, but I feel like there maybe other things like social media. Where are the different ways, personalities and identities of our businesses are being represented? What would you say is the key place that you feel like your identity for your business is living online?

Sarah: I would say it's in a couple of places. There's the more formal places like my website and, I would say, LinkedIn. Those are the more professional Sarah parts of the business that I do. Then, there's the more professional but also unique and authentic voice of Sarah, which I would say is primarily on my Twitter. I try really hard on my Twitter to walk that line of professional and personal. I tweet a lot about things that I've been working on or cool videos I put out or those kinds of things that are self-promotion kinds of things. I also share a lot of other people's content because I think that that's important, and I believe that that's how we increase our knowledge base in general is by sharing and lifting up the voices of others.

I also I will get in with GIF or JIF or GIF-JIF wars with my friends on Twitter sometimes, which is also really fun and a part of my personality that I want to emphasize, and that I think is what makes me who I am, and so that thought that goes into what am I posting on social media is not only what am I promoting on social media. It's what is the personality I'm cultivating on social media. I would say that the most authentic online version of Sarah is probably on Twitter. I'm @DrLangworthy if you want to see what that looks like. It's a little bit interesting. Sometimes there are really deep think-y pieces, and sometimes there are GIFs of cute minions. It just really depends.

I also think that being really thoughtful about how you put together that web presence, whether it's on social media or on your website is important, and it's something that I'm continually revamping. As I mentioned at the beginning of the episode, I'm thinking a little bit about what language am I using on my website. Am I primarily a content expert? Am I primarily a YouTuber? Am I primarily an author? Am I consultant? What am I? How do I represent all of those things in a way that it's clear and concise to the people who visit my website without being inaccurate either? That's where my challenge comes in. I'd be curious to hear from you, Katie. Where do you think you're most authentic online? How do you work to cultivate that personality?

Katie: This is actually a really difficult question for me to answer. In terms of authenticity, I think that the places where I'm most authentic are actually my podcasts because ... I want to raise this issue, and I've actually talked about this in other places. One of the areas that I have struggled with for a long time, and have really devoted a lot of my own professional development too is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is not something that comes easily to me. For people who are familiar with emotional intelligence, it's basically how do you engage with other people in a way, like, when I walk into the office on Monday morning, emotional intelligence is asking my staff how their weekend went before I dive into what am I doing right now, what's on our to-do list?

This is an area, just because my personality and because I'm a doer, I'm just focusing on what do we need to do? When I work with clients, in particular coaching clients, this has been a real stretch area for me, to make sure that I'm really bringing that emotional intelligence to that client work. For years, I have devoted time to doing this. Where I see this breakdown is on social media. It is very hard for me to constantly be giving time to nurturing relationships on social media because I try to so hard in my day-to-day life to do this face-to-face because it is not natural for me.

It is way more easy for me to set up my social media scheduling platform to be pushing out different resources from other people, pushing out different resources that I have created, and content that I have created, than to go on and try to nurture relationships in these spaces in a really regular and consistent way, and in a way that feels authentic to me because I don't feel authentic in most spaces. It's unnatural for me to go and do those things. I mean, if you see me interacting online, one thing to know is it is always me. I mean, like people said, I've mentioned on the last episode, is there a team that's helping you do this? No. There is no team.

There is a social media scheduling platform called Edgar, which I will link to in the show notes [inaudible 00:19:47], and to be active on social media. When people talk with me, I do respond every time. It's not like I'm a robot. I mean, I want to be clear on this, but I feel like when it comes to podcasting, when I can do the introspection and the reflection, that feels more authentic to me because I'm sharing process, and it's really hard for me to share process in little snippets on Twitter.

Sarah: That's really interesting. It's interesting to hear especially, in the last episode, we talked a little bit about are we introverts or are we extroverts. We both fall on the introvert side of the spectrum. One of the things that I've found as an introvert is that online spaces are actually the place where I feel more comfortable having those one-off conversations. I'm way more likely to respond to somebody on Twitter who I would never, in a million years, walk up to in person. If they were across the room, I'd be hiding in the corner but, because they put something fun out on Twitter, I might reply to it or re-tweet it, or that sort of thing, engage in that space because it feels less of a big deal, in a way, it's less threatening in some ways, and so I actually am more comfortable in online spaces. I can certainly put on the façade of being in control, and totally professional-pant Sarah when I need to in real life but, in reality, I'm way more comfortable at engaging one-on-one with people in online spaces.

Katie: I think that it's interesting because, as an introvert, I would say the same is true for me. It's just what comes naturally is to just not do that emotional intelligence work. It's interesting because, I think, for people out there listening who also struggle with this, you probably know. You can do that work, it just is not the first thing that occurs to you, so I find in online spaces, I fall back a lot easier into what is my natural inclination. I just have to practice more. I mean, that's the challenge. I've actually been thinking in the next ... What if I can clear off some time? In the next month or so, I'm really going to re-evaluate my social media strategy because a lot of my social media strategy for the past year was really tied to experimentation because I was writing a book on what does it need to be a professional online?

I was doing a lot of things that I might not typically do because I was just trying things out so that I could talk about them from a place of experience, and in terms of also connecting it to the research I was doing. I mean, I think I want to go on and re-evaluate what are the different kind of things that I'm pushing out into the world and how are people responding to it, and all the metrics behind it and all that. It's, again, a great episode for a future podcast.

Sarah: Agreed. Any listeners out there who have thoughts on this, how do you be a real person on the internet kind of thing, feel free to tweet us and engage us in that conversation. We'd love to hear your thoughts and your ideas on how to do this balance because, Katie, as you said, you're writing a whole book on this question of how do you be a professional on the internet. I think there are lots of different ways to do it, and it's not always clear what is the best way, or if there is a best way, so always looking for ideas from others on that.

Katie: Absolutely. People can tweet us at academigig or, Sarah, you mentioned you're @DrLangworthy. I'm @Katie\_\_Linder, and we can link to all that in the show notes as well. Also, there's a contact email on our website, academigig.com, if you want to shoot us a quick note about things that you're thinking about around these issues. Sarah, I would love to shift our conversation to talking about our professional websites because this is one of those things. I feel like mine has been under construction for a long time, not actively, but I feel like every six months or so, I've been really heavily tweaking it. I feel like I finally landed on something that feels good to me, although there are pages within it that I know I'm going to change. The structure of it is feeling pretty good to me. Talk to me about your professional website. When did you start it? What's the story of it? How has it changed over time?

Sarah: I started my website, I want to say, two to three years ago. I started it primarily as a place to drive people who were reading my book. I knew I wanted to connect my online presence to my book in a meaningful way. What I did is I created a few sub-pages that were linking to valuable resources or things that I thought were really important or extensions of the work that I highlighted in the book. I have these web pages that were resource, static resource pages, so that people who wanted more information on parental incarceration, for example, if that was a topic they were really interested in, they could go to my website and find that topic and some more resources on that topic. My thought was that gets that deeper engagement piece a little bit, and makes people aware of some of the stuff I'm doing online.

Since then, a lot of stuff has changed including that, now, I'm full-time self-employed. I've had to change the focus of the website a little bit, and I've also had to change some of my headers and those sorts of things. I've been trying to figure out, again, what are those identities, what are those words that describe the stuff I'm doing that people understand, that aren't jargony, or that people can connect with very easily and quickly. I've tried to make the homepage as clean as possible, and have my couple of different categories of things that I do, or things that I'm focused on, so if somebody comes to my website looking for information on booking me as a speaker, it's very clear where to click for that. If somebody's looking to consult, again, very clear where to click for that. If somebody's looking for information on the book, again, very straightforward.

Then, as you drill down into the website, then it gets a little more murky for me. I think it's a little harder to figure out how you build this in a way that's engaging for people but also gives them all the information they need. I tend to be a little bit verbose. I don't know if you've noticed. One of the challenges I have is just being short, and direct, and to the point on the website, but also still being authentically me. I think that's one of the things I wrestle with quite a bit with respect to the website. In general, I'm also in this place of, okay, how do I want to change this? I think one of the main points that I keep reminding myself is that your website should never be completely static.

You should always be thinking about updating it here and there, and that doesn't have to mean a huge website overhaul, but be thinking about what are the different ways that I could tweak this, or adjust this to make it better and to improve it? Sometimes, you can dig into the analytics and get a sense for who's coming to your website, from where, and how, and maybe that helps inform the decisions you make about design, but, a lot of it for me is like, oh, this doesn't quite feel right. Let's adjust this a little bit, or let's move this over here, or try to feature this differently.

For me, it's a lot of trial and error. I don't have a lot of great expertise in this area, and I'll be really curious to hear, Katie, what you have to say about this because I know you do some web design kinds of work. I'm super eager to hear what do you do on your professional website, and how are you conceptualizing what that looks like and what it communicates?

Katie: Sure. The first thing I feel I need to say is websites are really hard.

Sarah: They are. Agreed. Cheers to that.

Katie: This has not gotten easy over time for me and, actually, I feel like some of the insights I have have definitely been from working with clients recently. I'm very cautious even to say like, "I do web design." I feel like I do website creation work. I think I'm not trained as a web designer, and I really respect people who are trained as web designers, and so I want to be really cautious about dipping my toes in those waters. It was interesting because that part of my business came about because people would visit my website and say, "Who designed your website?" I would say, "I designed my website." They would say, "Do you do this for other people?"

I started to dabble into this by doing some pilot projects, complementary pilot projects for colleagues that I knew needed website redesign. Then, I now offer it as a service as part of my business. Really, it's actually offered as a service only in relationship to coaching I do with academics around branding. The package I offer around this is a series of conversations about you and your personal and professional brand, and what are you trying to do. It's not like you just come to me, and you pay me, and I build you a website. I mean, it is a multi-phase process that I've outlined for working with clients on this particular area.

For my own website, as part of this actually, the reason I go into all that is when you go to my professional website, we can link to this in the show notes, the area I have for website creation work, I actually have created a four-part video series talking about my own professional website, and how it's developed over time because I think that that is, like you said, Sarah, you are always in there tweaking. It's not something like, you know, you finished your website, and it's done forever. It doesn't work that way, and so I really wanted to clarify for people how I've done this over time and the decisions I've made.

To keep a long story short, and you can go and look at these videos if you want the longer story, I had a professional website. I made it super simple when I went on the market last time in 2015. Then, when I started my LLC, I launched a new website presence in the summer of 2016. This was around the time I launched my podcast, You've got this. Then, partway through 2016, I decided I needed to branch off of that professional website to have a specific site for my LLC. I had one site that was really was just talking about my projects, my podcasts, and my books, and things like that. Then, I had a second site, which was where you can hire me.

One site was really like, "Here are all the stuff I give away for free, and here's who I am." Then, the other site was like, "Oh, you want to work with me? Here's all the ways you can work with me." Now, within the last couple of months, though, because I've started selling products, I have this webinar series that I launched within the past couple of weeks. It did not seem right to me anymore to be separating out these two websites. What I decided to do was to merge them back together again. Now, when you visit my professional website, there's an About page, there's a Projects page, where you can see my podcast, my webinars, my books, all these different kinds of things that I do, there is a blog.

I've taken all these stuff that I used to put out into Medium, which is a group-blogging platform, and I brought it back to my own website a way to drive people to my website, and then I also have a Work With Me tab. When you go into the Work With Me tab, you can find out about my individual coaching, you can find out about the website creation services, you can find out about my speaking and workshop facilitation services, and you can find out about some virtual writing groups that I'm planning to host next summer. You can find out about these different ways that you can work with me and hire me, basically, but I've merged those things back together, and that's been interesting.

I really liked the process of doing it. I felt like it really helps me to streamline what is it that I'm trying to do, and I actually ended up stripping away, especially in my speaking and workshop facilitation, I ended up stripping away a lot of the stuff that I used to offer, and I don't offer it anymore. It was a really interesting process because I feel like ... It's not done. To clarify, like you said, Sarah, it's never done, but I feel like it's in a more stable place now after merging those two things back together.

Sarah: I like what you said there about bringing things back home, for lack of a better term, the idea of connecting things that you had in different places, and emphasizing that they're all connected in a way because you are the connecting point.

Katie: Yes.

Sarah: One of the things I often see with professional websites, maybe you can weigh in on this as well, is the lack of intentionality about connecting all of the places that we exist on the internet in one place. One of the things, I think, my website, the focus of my website is, honestly, just to say, okay, here's where I am on Twitter, here's where I am on YouTube, here's where I am on LinkedIn. It's that place where you can find me on all of the platforms that you prefer to operate on but, here on my website, is where I can connect those. Sometimes, I find it really hard when I go to a person's website or I go to an organization's website, and I can't find where they are on Twitter, or I can't find the link to their Facebook page, or their Medium blog, or whatever it is.

I think part of the purpose of the website is just to be that starting place for people to find you in other places, or to be that place where somebody finds you on Twitter, and then goes to your website, and learns, oh, you're over here, or, oh, you're doing this cool thing, and so showcasing your work in different areas and different places in the internet, I feel like is something that sometimes people miss on a website.

Katie: Yeah, I think that's true. Also, I can't tell you how many academic websites I've gone to where I can't find their email, like people don't want you to contact them or something. I'm like, I'm trying to contact you, I want to collaborate with you, or I want to hire you, or whatever, and I cannot find [inaudible 00:33:58], so please put your email on your professional website.

Sarah: Or at least a contact page.

Katie: Yeah. Exactly.

Sarah: Something, some way to get in touch.

Katie: I think you're absolutely right. These websites serve as homebase. I've talked about this on You Got This. I've done a couple of episodes now on professional websites, and I think that that is area good reason because Twitter could be gone tomorrow. If you're trying to set up your home base on someone else's platform, it's not the most stable thing. The other thing that I think you've raised, and this part of the process I walk clients through is websites are not really about you. They're about the visitors. They're about the user experience. You really want to think about why would somebody come to your website. They would come to your website because they want to contact you, or they want to learn more about your projects, or they want to learn how to work with you, or they need your bio, or they need a head shot.

There's very functional reasons that people would come to your website, and they need to be able to clearly find what they're looking for right from the very beginning. I think the challenge for a lot of people is they may not know who's coming to their website, so they're not sure where to direct them, or they may not have a clear idea of their own map of where people should go, or where they want to direct people, or the pathways that they're trying to create on their website. This is where, I think, working with someone else, whether it's hiring someone or just having a conversation with someone about what is it that you might want to know if you come to my website that we'll help you create these pathways and to make sure the website is functional, and really pleasurable from a user experience perspective.

You want someone to come on to your website and stay there. You want them to look around, and dig around on your blog, and really see who are and what you represent. If you have this outdated website that's clearly not being updated and has errors on it, and it's not mobile friendly, and all these other things, people are not going to want to do that. I feel like this is really ... I talk about in my book that your online presence is your curb appeal, and it's a very capitalist way of thinking about this, so I understand why some people would be put off by that, but, when we're online, it's important how people view us.

People make split-second decisions about whether or not they're going to follow you, or whether or not they want to know more about you, or whatever it is. If that's important to you, I feel like your professional website is a cornerstone. I mean, it is a huge part of the foundation of who you are online. I'm just a huge believer and thinking really carefully about what is it that people need from you when they go to your professional website.

Sarah: I totally agree. I suspect most of our listeners have had the experience of finding somebody on social media, or finding somebody on a website, and going to that website, and having the reaction of, like, "Yeah, I don't really need to know them," but also having the experience with other people going to the website and being like, "Wow! This person's really cool. They're doing cool stuff. I want to know them." You want the second one. That's the reaction you want to generate from people. You want them to get excited about the work you're doing, and potential ways they might connect with you. If your website doesn't do that, arguably, especially in the self-employment world, it's not doing it right. You need to have that energy and that sense that people want to be near you. People want to hear from you and want to be connected to you in some way. That's what you want to go for.

Katie: When I think that there's definitely a difference between people who are really well-established in the consulting world, and in the self-employment world, where they have a network that's been built over time, and they don't need a professional website. They have something else going on. I've definitely talked with these people, and they've contacted me and said, "What do you think about this?" I'm like, "I'll be happy to work with you," but my special concern with those folks is sometimes they're hard to contact because it's hard to know how to get ahold of them.

For people who are just starting out, this to me is mandatory. You need a professional presence that you own, that you control the aesthetic over, that you are not relying on social media channels, or other channels. Not to say those are not supplementing your online presence because they certainly are, and having a Facebook page, and all those kinds of things, but websites are so easy to do now in terms of what you pay to buy a domain name, and hosting, and all those different kind of things. It is not out of the realm of possibility that people can do this on their own. I think that that's another thing. The gate keeping is over in terms of creating your own professional presence. You really can figure it out.

The other piece I would say, though, is I think by merging my two professional websites back together, I was able to take a slightly different tone on the website I just launched, and I also recently got new head shots done. These are my second round of head shots this year, I should say, because I got my hair cut twice [crosstalk 00:39:03] ways, and so I needed to do it a second time. Actually, the first time I did my head shots, I felt like they came out pretty serious. They weren't playful in any way, shape, or form. The second time I went back to do them, I wanted to have a little more personality.

I feel like this new website offer some of that, and it gave me the opportunity to really ... I mean, I don't want to go as far as to say shift my brand because I don't think it's that monumental of a change, but I definitely feel like it opens it up to be like, "This is who I am," even to the point where, my About page, I put likes and dislikes, and got a little bit personal than I have in the past because, especially when I'm working with people one-on-one, we are developing relationship. I feel like that relationship development starts on this website when you first come to learn about me and see if we might be a fit to work together.

Sarah: I think that's a great point especially when you're thinking about those potential clients or people you might work with. Frankly, if they're put off by the fact that you have a slightly silly photo on your website, or that you have talked about the things that you like and dislike, they're probably not the people you want to work with. The great thing about being able to be more personal online, and show that side of yourself on your professional website, is I think may even filter out some of those clients that are not a great fit. It's not that they wouldn't be a great fit for someone else but, for you, if they're not going to be having a good sense of humor thrughout the process, for me, that's hard. I would like to work with people who have a sense of humor. If I can convey that that's my work style, and that's how I roll, that makes that relationship more likely to start off on the right foot, I would say.

Katie: Agreed. All right. Before we start to share some resources that have been helpful for us in relationship to this, is there anything else you want to say, Sarah, about wearing multiple hats?

Sarah: Just that I love my hat collection, and it's really fun.

Katie: Me too.

Sarah: I don't know. I mean, I have said this before in the podcast, that I love having these different avenues that I'm exploring all at the same time. The pressure's just often to specialize, to find your niche, and to do one thing really well. That's not who I am. I love having these different things that I'm working on that are in completely different areas in some cases, and I love the challenge of that. I love that no day looks the same. There's nothing that I'm focusing on one day that's, frankly, not completely different from something I'm doing the next. That's a variety that I really appreciate, and so I love being able to switch back and forth between things.

It also opens me up to meeting a lot of different people, which I love. I love meeting new people, and learning about our similarities, and things that we might really jell on. Frankly, that's how you and I met, Katie. I'm very thankful for that. I'm very thankful for having those different hats. My ever expanding hat collection, I'm just going to keep tacking them on. It's great.

Katie: All right. Let's jump into our resources for this week related to wearing multiple hats. I actually have one that I just thought of. I've not read this yet but I actually think it could be useful to our listeners, and it is on my to-read pile. I've heard really great things about it. It's a book called How To Be Everything by Emilie Wapnick. This is a book that is meant for people who like to go in multiple directions all at once. You do not want to hone in on their businesses or other things that they're working on. I think the subtitle is something like 'People who don't know what they want to be at when they grow up'.

This is something that I want to be looking into because I think that, like you mentioned, Sarah, there is pressure to really hone in and to be very specific about the kinds of things that you're supposed to be doing in your business, and the kinds of clients you want to work with, and, for both of us. We've moved in a lot of different directions and are still exploring in a lot of ways. I think it's okay. I think this book says it's okay. If you're like Sarah and I, and you want to explore without guilt. Maybe this is the book that would be helpful for you. Sarah, what's your resource?

Sarah: That's great. I love that framework and how to be everything because that's sometimes what it feels like. It feels like I'm trying to be everything. Sometimes people give me funny looks but, you know, that's all right. I'm going to do me. As for my resource for today, I have fairly recently stumbled upon this online program called the Canva for those of you who are not graphically inclined in terms of graphic design or those sorts of things. Canva provides really great, free, if you're looking for that ... You can also do paid options, but it provides a really great way to create those graphics that you need on your website or in your other social media accounts, things like YouTube thumbnails, or post on Facebook, or other social media things.

It also lets you do fliers and letterhead, and those sorts of things, but it provides a library of different shapes and ways to feature different photos and colors and designs. It's a really great resource for people, especially like me, who are just not going to be able to come up with a really cool design off the top of your head. They provide a lot of great templates and things that you can and play around with. I've been using Canva a ton for a lot of different projects in the last few weeks. For those of you who don't know about that, definitely check it out because it's a great resource if you're looking at graphics, and how do I represent things online. Definitely, check it out.

Katie: I have to jump on the Canva bandwagon as well. I do pay for the monthly subscription to this, and I can talk about why. One other thing I use Canva for is [inaudible 00:44:55]. I create keynote in workshops [inaudible 00:45:00] with Canva that I really like. I've also used Canva for a lot of graphics on my website and things like that. When I do blog post, I do a graphic, I build that in Canva. One of the things that you can pay for with this, and the free subscription actually worked for me for a long time, the reason I jumped to the paid is because it has this option of resizing. You don't have to build something and then rebuild it in a different size, and they're smart this way.

You have to pay for this because it actually saved me a ton of time. I'll maybe build a slide presentation, and then I'll want to tweak it to be a workbook style, but I'll want to use the same look and feel, so I can change the dimensions, and then just tweak it so that it looks a little bit different. For all of your social media art, I mean, this you probably know, social media platforms use lots of different sizing. You could create one piece of art and then resize it to five different social media platforms in 15 seconds.

Sarah: You're making me drool over here. I'm really sad I don't have the paid version.

Katie: It's a thing. I know. It's a thing. Also, there's some stuff that comes ... I think, with just the paid version around brand colors and things like that, so if you're always using certain colors in your brand, and also if you want to be sharing amongst your team, there's all kinds of things you could do there. I am a power user of Canva. I've been a power user for a year, and I'm in there every week. I mean, everything I create for my podcast, I mean, there's so many things that I use that platform here. It's been huge for my business, so I got to jump on that bandwagon too.

Sarah: Great. I think we've had a great conversation today talking about these different hats, and identities, and those sorts of things. Any other last thoughts, Katie, before we sign off?

Katie: Well, let's talk a little bit about what we are doing next time. On the next episode, we are going to be chatting about our biggest fears about our businesses. If you want to know what are the kinds of things that keep Katie and Sarah up at night related to their businesses, check out our next episode. Sarah, always good to talk with you. Thanks to our listeners that are checking in with us this week. You can find us online at academigig.com, where you can find all of our show notes. You can also sign up for our mailing list to receive over a hundred free resources for academic creatives, entrepreneurs, and freelancers. Then, also contact us directly to let us know about a topic you like us to cover on the show, or to share your story. We always love to hear from listeners. If you would like to, we would welcome you popping over to iTunes and rating and reviewing the show. It helps other people to find the show if you find it to be useful for you.

Sarah: Great. Well, thanks everybody for tuning in. Katie, we'll talk again soon. I'm excited.

Katie: All right. Bye everybody.

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