

WePlot: Matching Publishers and Producers Across Latin America

In a region with fewer agents, two entrepreneurs are building a platform to facilitate more book-to-audiovisual adaptations and projects.



From left: Diana Naviez and Ana Luiza Beraba (Image: Adam Critchley)

By Adam Critchley

Founded by entrepreneurs from Brazil and Colombia and headquartered in Uruguay, WePlot is a pan-American platform established to act as a bridge between publishers and production houses. The intent of the company's creators is to facilitate rights transactions and audiovisual production.

Started by Ana Luiza Beraba of Brazil and Diana Naviez of Colombia, WePlot harnesses artificial intelligence and data analytics to create a catalogue of works available for adaptation to audio, film, and television producers. One way the company describes this is to say it's "an aggregator network of content in development."

The company has been selected for an incubation program by the Uruguayan National Agency for Research and Innovation, and plans to launch a series of investment rounds.

Beraba tells *Publishing Perspectives* that WePlot is operating in analog mode during its acceleration phase as the company works to define its marketplace.

'Adapting Books to Audiovisual'

"We hope to offer a service that could cure some of the headaches," Beraba says, referring to the often lengthy process of adapting books to audiovisual formats.

"Production companies can be over-

whelmed when searching for content," she says. "There's a large amount of editorial content, and it needs to be curated. Our crusade is to find the stories and the talent so we can speed up the audiovisual production process."

Beraba and Naviez gave a talk at Frankfurt Buchmesse's recent CONTEC conference in Mexico City, which focused on transmedia narratives and the use of AI. The conference, according to WePlot's founders, facilitated meetings with Mexican publishers, whose feedback has been positive.

"With the way the book-to-audiovisual process currently works," Beraba says, "books often encounter scriptwriting problems, and our job is to bring together all the players: authors, publishers, scriptwriters, and production companies in one place."

"Our idea is to create a marketplace so that publishers can make content available for production—either already published books or those in the process of being published—and then producers can see what is available. We don't sell ready-to-film projects. Instead, we're positioning ourselves in the production process, at the end of the publishing process, when an editor's work is done. From there, we take the book to production companies."

"We aggregate, index, curate, and catalogue stories in development," she says.

Bringing Key Players Together

"Our relationship with publishers and lit-

erary agents is key because they know the market and authors, and which books are in the process of being published, and which often sell better than those already published.

"Given that there isn't a strong tradition of literary agents in Latin America, we want to work with publishing professionals in the region. Most of the great Latin American writers have their agents in Barcelona."

The platform also is meant to work as a writers' room, allowing scriptwriters to sign up to its network and be notified when a producer is looking for someone to adapt a book for screens.

Beraba says WePlot can also help authors and publishers achieve more fruitful negotiations with audiovisual production companies, "because we know the terms and demands of the audiovisual market," she says.

"With the prior experience we bring, we can get around certain traps and make the negotiation more fair and balanced."

In 2010 in Brazil, Beraba founded Film2B, a company that licenses literary works for audiovisual adaptation, and whose clients, she says, have included 20th Century Fox and the media company Globo. Her WePlot partner Naviez has a background in television and film production.

"Our business model has been validated by players in the market who all are looking for their next hit," Beraba says, "as it can be difficult to find good content among so many countries in Latin America."

Curation is important to many producers, who complain that they waste a lot of time reading projects that aren't right for what they need. WePlot can aid in this process by offering a curated selection, Beraba says.

"Often projects that come in aren't ready to be presented to a producer. Maybe it's a good idea but not told well. So we work to make a piece more attractive and we design a commercial strategy."

And although focusing on the whole continent is complicated, she says, WePlot is designed to simplify the search.

"The Spanish-speaking market is even more complex than the Brazilian one," Beraba says, "because there are so many countries, and each one has its idiosyncrasies, its laws, its tax systems, bureaucracy. And yet the aggregator model has its advantages because it allows a publisher or producer to negotiate with just one interface, and find all they need in a one-stop shop."

"We are not so interested in big names or prize-winning works," Beraba says. "We're interested in powerful stories," Beraba says. •