Red Hot Internet Publicity

An Insider's Guide to Promoting
Your Book on the Internet

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Your Book on the Internet

BY PENNY C. SANSEVIERI

Foreword by Laurence J. Kirshbaum

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Red Hot Internet Publicity: An Insider's Guide to Promoting Your Book on the Internet

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To everyone who's ever been called an
Internet geek, your time has come

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usual tsunami of e-mails. To Nancy who, while new to us, has found her place at AME and has become an incredibly valuable part of our Team. I am blessed to be surrounded by so many amazing people. To Larry Kirshbaum for not only being a friend and supporter but for always believing in me. I hope you wear your AME Team uniform with pride. And finally to Mac, for the lessons, both good and bad, that you taught me and for helping me steer this ship, if only for a little while.

To Alexander Dake and the Team at Cosimo, it's been fabulous working with you all and now that my book has found a home there I am excited to be a part of your publishing list. Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

There are many more people that I need to thank, and thankfully too many to list here. I am fortunate to not only be in this industry, but to be surrounded by many amazing people who always make me look so good. To them I say: Thank you. This journey wouldn't be possible without you.

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I have many blessings in my life. To list them all here would be endless. I continue to have a grateful heart for my work and my mission and I am enormously fortunate to be able to do what I love. I wish you the same kind of happiness.

Foreword

by Laurence J. Kirshbaum
Founder, LJK Literary Management
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When I started in the book business (shortly after the Peloponnesian War), most authors believed that their job was completed when they turned in their manuscript. However, a legendary figure named Jacqueline Susann was a special breed. It was the late '60s, and Jackie wrote *Valley of the Dolls* and a host of other mega-hits. She believed the author's job had only begun when she wrote "the end." Jackie pioneered the "author tour" and was always on the road pushing her books. She kept fastidious notes of every store or radio show where she appeared and her Christmas mailing list was well over 25,000 names. (Thankfully, postage was a bit cheaper in those days!)

Over a publishing career spanning 40 years, I've watched the publicity revolution become more and more of an everyday necessity for authors who want to succeed whether they're trying to write bestselling fiction or specially targeted nonfiction. With hundreds of thousands of titles being published annually, authors must develop a "platform" that sets them and their book apart from the crowd. The good news is that you no longer have to travel to every nook and cranny of the country in order to get the message across. The Internet has started another

publicity revolution—a unique way for authors to find and stay in close touch with their potential audience. As Penny writes, "It's no longer a matter of whether you can get published. It's a matter of whether you can get noticed."

That's where this book comes in.

As a nontechie myself, the Internet has always seemed a bit daunting beyond the simpler uses of e-mail and search. What a blessing for authors (and agents and publishers) that Penny Sansevieri has stepped up to provide a lucid and thorough guide on how to put the Internet to work for you. And, best of all, she writes with humor and in nontechnical language that will have anyone up and running in no time. As the founder and leader of Author Marketing Experts, Inc., Penny has been helping authors turn their books into successes for a long time. And she is ably assisted in this book by some of her colleagues, including her search specialist Susan Gilbert who won my heart when she told me, "I love being a search expert because I can work at home and wear my pajamas to work."

Penny's book is extremely well organized so that readers can either digest it all in one reading, or turn to the parts that most interest them. Her main thesis is that there are now 150 million adult users of what she calls Web 2.0—"the consumer driven Internet." Thus, her succinct advice is "Don't sell your book—sell what it can do for the reader." The Internet reader is driven by the acronym WIIFM: What's In It For Me? Every part of the Internet strategy, from the design of the Web site to the copy within it, will revolve around the focus on the consumer. The best site, Penny writes, "will give your customer a Nordstrom shopping experience." (For those who don't know, Nordstrom is a department store highly respected for its obsession with creating a customer-friendly environment.)

Another important lesson is that while the Internet may be instantaneous, reader relationships have to be built over a period of time. "Be persistent, don't be a stalker," Penny quips. One powerful

tool for authors is blogging—although the author warns us there are now 9 million blogs and 40,000 new ones every day. But she hastens to add, there are 57 million readers of blogs and 87 percent of them buy books. So the water's warm, and this book will show you how to get started and stand out from the crowd. Penny sorts through a variety of ways that one can blog—for instance, you can "tweet" on Twitter or "squawk" on Squidoo or be a friend on Facebook. There are macro blogs and micro blogs and this book will help you pick the right one for your work.

Finally, the major takeaway from this book is to have courage. Don't be bashful, Penny says, even if your mother told you as a child that you should be seen and not heard. Her book will inspire you to get that "red hot" Internet publicity machine going. And remember, for all its complexity and scope, the objective is to use the Internet for "getting to market one reader at a time." So dig in and your name will be on everyone's lips (and everyone's reading list) very soon!

Introduction: The Microniching of American Publishing

Why Virtual Promotion Makes Sense

"I think there is a world market for maybe five computers."
—Thomas Watson, IBM Chairman, 1943

It's hard to fathom that a simple plane ride could change the entire dynamic of my business but it did. Back in 2003, I was on a flight bound from San Diego to New York. I was teaching a class on getting published, it was all about the print-on-demand industry which was still new, and still finding its place in the publishing world. Initially this form of publishing seemed rather benign to the New York market. A slew of companies had opened their doors, authors were getting published. So what? New York continued to ignore them. This was their first mistake. This form of publishing not only changed the manner in which many authors sought to get their work in print, but it has contributed to the change in book marketing overall.

I came to learn about print-on-demand well before it was even a blip on the New York publishing scene. Back in 1998 a company called Fat Brain was cranking out mostly academic, techie type books through a system called print-on-demand. The application itself was stunning. You could publish a book and print only one copy of it if you wanted to. That meant no more runs of thousands of books and

less risk for publishing. It also meant a dynamic change in publishing, one that would soon become a seismic shift and change the face of New York publishing forever. Soon this method of printing exploded into the print-on-demand industry, and new publishers, harnessing this technology, came from far and wide to take advantage of this trend. Before long, the print-on-demand industry was in full swing. The application was initially snubbed by most in publishing and written off as "garbage"; soon publishers went back to the work of rejecting most of the submissions they received and accepting only a select few, sometimes as little as one percent of everything submitted to them. The problem was, print-on-demand was flooding the market with books and these books were trying to find their way onto bookstore shelves, and the authors were jockeying for radio, television, and print. Often, the same targets traditionally published authors were seeking. This created a problem, a bottleneck of sorts in publishing. Why? Well, nowadays, it's no longer a matter of whether you can get published, it's a matter of getting your book noticed. If you're reading this book and you have been published by a Random House, Hachette, or Simon & Schuster, you might not think this matters to you but it does. It matters to everyone. Let me explain.

Let's say there's a writer from Los Angeles, who decides to take his dream of seeing his book published and make it a reality. He submits it to one of the print-on-demand publishers, and soon he's got twenty copies of his completed novel in his hand. It's a sci-fi thriller with a futuristic "this could actually happen" bent, it's a good book by his standards although certainly not by commercial publishing standards. The cover could have been better, the story tighter. Still, our author is proud of his work and starts e-mailing a few of his favorite sci-fi sites. Requests for the book start coming in, and he's sold his first twenty copies within a week of contacting these sites. He's proud of himself and leaves his Internet push for a while to start writing his second book.

When he checks his e-mail again he finds his box filled with requests for more copies. Ultimately, he's selling fifty and then one hundred copies of this book. Still not enough to make a New York publisher care, but he's happy, his book has found an audience and it's selling. He's a happy author.

Somewhere in Nebraska a mother of three just got copies of her book on meditating during pregnancy. A former nurse, then a meditation and yoga instructor, she's put together a plan for easing new mothers through labor by creating specialized meditation techniques they can use during pregnancy. She's taught it at her yoga class on special nights for soon-to-be moms, and women begin telling other women. Now she's teaching to packed classes several times a month. When her book arrives, her Web site is already up and has been taking advanced orders for some time. Her first shipment of five hundred books goes out the door almost as soon as it arrives. Since this book was so specialized and the author had no significant credentials, it would have been rare to find a New York publisher who would have considered carrying a book like this.

Both of these authors are an example of niches that have been found, cultivated, and marketed online. More often than not, trade publishing would overlook these niches in favor of the glamour of media, the prestige of a review in the *Times* or front window placement in a Barnes & Noble. All good things certainly. But not accessible to all authors.

In a world of consumer-created products and media, the barriers to entry are few, and hence, niches upon niches upon niches are born. It's what Chris Anderson of *Wired Magazine* calls "The Long Tail" (his book released in 2006 is a must-read). He asserts that the niches are lengthening the economic tail (an economic tail refers to a tail with two hypothetical ends, a bigger end for the blockbuster movies and books, and the smaller end of the tail for niche market books, independent films, and garage bands) and that the astounding rate by

which consumers are creating their own product, either through music, movies or books, is creating a world of a million niches.

All of these niches have moved us away from our world, which up until about the 1980s, was built on blockbusters, gold records and bestseller lists. It has not gone away, purports Chris, it's just sharing the stage for the first time in history with millions of other markets. The key to niches is accessibility.

The print-on-demand example I gave, which is just one of several, helped shift the dynamic on which our economic structure was built, and thereby lifted the curtain on all the niches that were there all along, only no one could find them. Do you think that no one had these ideas before the age of print-on-demand, iTunes and Amazon? Sure they did, but accessibility was an issue that's now been solved, by first lowering the barrier to entry, and then giving these books and products a home on the Net, where anyone can find them at any time of the day or night.

The bestseller list is a great example of how this dynamic is changing publishing. Lulu.com, one of the print-on-demand giants, released a report recently that indicated that the life expectancy of a bestseller has dropped considerably. In the 1950s, *Advise and Consent* by Allen Drury spent fifty-seven weeks on the bestseller list; if that book were released now, it might only spend three weeks there. Why? Because there are more books and many more niches that are driving this market into a shifting state. Now that publishing is no longer controlled by New York alone, it's in the hands of anyone who wants to publish and consequently, niche books may sell better and over a longer period of time than their mass-market counterparts do.

Since the curtain has been lifted and we can see how the man behind it does his job, we can do it, too, and thanks to Jeff Bezos, and the insight of other online retailers, we now have a way to sell our creations. But here's the rub: you've got to find an audience. Niches are great as long as they find a home and that's where the Internet comes

in. The Net allows authors to connect with their niche groups. Even if they've written in a genre as broad as mystery, the groups are still out there on the Net, just waiting to be found. As this long tail continues to grow and expand with the various niches, the Net will become a much more significant way to sell a book than ever before.

There's a story that circulated in the industry about a book called *Touching the Void*. This book, published in 1998, was a harrowing account of near-death in the Peruvian Andes. The book got great reviews, but never managed to hit its stride. Then another book about a mountain climbing tragedy: *Into Thin Air,* became a huge hit and suddenly, *Touching the Void* started selling again. Soon, *Touching the Void* was outselling *Into Thin Air* and the publisher decided to go back and reprint this book, which spent fourteen weeks on *The New York Times* bestseller list.

How did this happen? Internet word of mouth. People who read *Into Thin Air* recommended the other title at sites like Amazon.com and other online booksellers, and soon the buyers were getting both. They key here is that without this channel, no one would have been able to recommend *Touching the Void* except maybe to a few friends over coffee. But the Net gave fans of this book access to it as well as the ability to share their views.

Probably the most important piece of this is that the Net is a cluster of chatter; the key is to find the chatter that belongs to you, to find your tribe and get them interested in your book because, after all, it's what they wanted in the first place.

I developed the idea for the Virtual Author Tour™ during that plane ride from San Diego to New York. The publishing world was becoming quite "noisy" with all the new books being published and written, and the advent of self-publishing and print-on-demand was filling that channel and creating a bottleneck. Reviewers were reviewing less and less, print space in newspapers was shrinking because of all of these books being printed and vying for the attention of the media, and

shelf space was harder to come by than a good seat on an airplane. I was worried that our authors were getting the losing end of this wonderful publishing revolution and that it was starting to drown out their success. The double-edged sword many authors face is that the low barrier to publishing meant everyone could publish, and they did. On average, eight hundred to a thousand books are published each day in this country; the bad news is that eight hundred books are published each day in this country. That's when it hit me. We have always done Internet promotion but it was always a minor piece of our campaigns. I felt it was time that we did a little role switching. Perhaps the Internet needed to be the star of the show and traditional media its understudy.

As I began to noodle some ideas I realized that I'd hit on something. At that point there were a few sprinkling of companies that offered Internet promotion, but nothing like what I was going to attempt to do. I envisioned a "Tour" on the Net, just like you'd tour the country, only you never had to leave your house. The Tour would connect readers with the books they loved and circumvent traditional media and bookstores altogether. And the most amazing piece of this was that unlike a mention in a newspaper that would soon end up in someone's recycling bin, an impression on someone's Web site would stay up for as long as the site remained on the Net.

The power and permanency of this, and its significance on a campaign, could not be overstated. For someone whose entire life has been devoted to traditional PR, this was a huge gamble. If I did this and it worked, it would effectively mean that the strategies our company was built upon might become meaningless. It might also mean that the seismic shift that was being felt in New York publishing was about to rock the offices of Author Marketing Experts, Inc. as well.

As I continued to develop and research this concept, I realized I needed to test this first, and why not on myself? What I found was astounding. First, it not only worked, it worked so well that we became flooded with new business and book sales. Second, I found that people

started telling me, "I see your name everywhere," meaning that every time they visited a site on publishing or book marketing there was a piece of me there, a remnant of the "Tour" I'd taken my company on. I realized then we were ready to take this into the consumer market.

Who's Online? Everyone!

Web population hit a new high in the U.S. with the online population reaching a 73 percent high for adults (or 147 million users). These figures represent an increase from 66 percent or 133 million adults.

We tested a few books with great success, and then came *Cookin' for Love*, a novel by Sharon Boorstin. In June of 2005 it was featured in a full-page spread in More Magazine. The piece they did on Sharon and the book was great, but the problem was it didn't really blip on the sales screen. I will typically monitor Amazon.com's sales ranking to see when it jumps, because that's often an indicator of a story that's appeared or some other publicity for the author. We had just started her Virtual Author Tour™ and the requests were flooding in for her book. We targeted the boomer women market, since given the book's topic that was the obvious choice.

In July of 2005, the book was languishing somewhere in the high 500,000s on Amazon. At about that time, we got six bloggers to review the book and they all did so within four days of each other. The book jumped to a sales ranking of 18,000 on Amazon, and then to 13,000, where it stayed for nearly a week. Not bad for a self-published book, and certainly not bad for a book that New York publishers had turned down because they felt the main characters in *Cookin' for Love* were, at the age of fifty, too old to be interesting. The book has since been optioned for a movie.

Since that time we have seen numerous books hit various bestseller lists, all of these books were in a variety of our Internet programs and the bestseller lists they were on ranged from *The New York Times,* to the *Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Los Angeles Times* and more. The list is endless and so are the successes. Our Internet Publicity and Marketing programs have seen incredible growth, so much so that we now have an entire division dedicated to Internet Publicity and as far as programs and authors go, it has eclipsed anything we've ever done in terms of success to the author.

What's happened now is that traditional media is paying attention to these bloggers and these Internet campaigns, so much so that a recent Columbia University study found that 98 percent of media now finds their experts online. This means that if you're not online, you might be missing out on a boatload of publicity.

Understanding Social Media and Internet Marketing

"A journey of a thousand sites begins with a single click."—author unknown

Internet marketing in its simplest form is pushing yourself and your message (book) on the Net. It's not pitching to Oprah or *The Today Show,* it's pitching yourself or your topic to Net-based markets, news sites, or blogs, podcasts and appropriate online venues. In addition, Internet marketing and publicity campaigns include a number of additional elements: submitting articles for syndication, posting your press releases, holding author events such as teleseminars and conferences, producing e-books and newsletters, networking, and more.

When the first glimmer of Internet publicity entered the world of PR, most authors thought it was pretty boring. I mean, how exciting could it be to pitch yourself to a blog or newsgroup? There were no cameras; heck, there wasn't even a microphone. But, in the case of bloggers, their power began to take over, and TV newsrooms and newspapers started to get nervous. Newspapers lost subscribers to these outspoken, opinionated bloggers, and TV news started to tread a

fine line between breaking news and following up on news that broke hours earlier on blogs all across the Net. Often bloggers were able to get news out first, and depending where they were located in the world, some were even quicker on the scene than most major news stations, CNN included. And depending on the market they're going after, some bloggers have been known to get as many readers as a daily newspaper. The Daily Kos gets more incoming links than the Chicago *Tribune*, and Instapundit, a blog run by Glenn Reynolds in his spare time, has more incoming links than *Sports Illustrated.*

What's Web 2.0?

Is Web 2.0 a widget or some new Internet Explorer download? No, it's none of those things. Web 2.0 is about the consumer driven Internet. Sites like YouTube, Facebook, MySpace, and Squidoo have all grown not because the media focused on them, but because consumers came in droves and the media soon followed. It's safe to say in a Web 2.0 world that the media will follow the consumer, hands down. Build consumer buzz and the media is sure to follow. According to Wikipedia (another Web 2.0 property): "The term became notable after the first O'Reilly Media Web 2.0 conference in 2004. Although the term suggests a new version of the World Wide Web, it does not refer to an update to any technical specifications, but to changes in the ways software developers and end users use the Web.

The advent of blogging, podcasting and other Web 2.0 "citizen generated media" has created a long tail of media drivers, and the further we get down the tail, the more we find that the television programs we would have traded a kidney for in the past are not even skimming the surface of the media that really drives readers to

books, and consequently, to sales. The idea, in my opinion, of Internet publicity isn't just publicizing yourself on the Net, it's getting into peer groups that have solid, focused messages that match yours. And it's about creating your momentum online by going after online media, regardless of whether the blogger is with MSNBC or the Boomer Women of America's Web site. As long as it's in your topic, and the site isn't a mom and pop "here's what we're having for dinner" type of site, you may be close to striking Internet gold.

Newspaper Circulation Declines 2.6 Percent

Newspaper circulation fell 2.6 percent in the six-month period ending in March 2006, as more people turned to the Internet and other media outlets for news and information, according to media expert and author Michael Levine.

If you're going to go through all the trouble of putting yourself "out there" on the Net, you should make sure the footprint you leave is lasting. You can do this by developing a list of sites your readers will find valuable as well as sites that have a long standing and solid reputation in the Internet community. My father used to say, "If you lie down with dogs, you'll get fleas." The same can be said for the sites you partner with. Don't just accept links to your sites willy-nilly, partner with sites that are a reflection of your own message. Once you have this list, remember that relationships take time. Don't expect to get top billing on the first go around, you may have to work hard to contribute to the site, or offer other content or freebies to the site's visitors.

The next piece of this is staying current. At my company, we know how tough it can be to stay on top of or ahead of trends, but trust me, it's worth the time you'll spend. But if you're drowning in e-mail newsletters and daily news bulletins, here's my recommendation:

set aside an hour or two each week to go through all your industry publications. This way you have a solid time dedicated to doing this and aren't trying to read a blog or newsletter when the phones are going off or your boss is walking in asking you where your next project is.

Did You Know?

Wikipedia now has over 4,000,000 entries.
YouTube has 100,000,000 videos.
Second Life has 1.5 million residents.
And there are 200,000,000 blogs (and someone blogs every 18 seconds).

When you pick your "staying current" hour (or two), schedule it in. Staying on top of trends is very important and you'll find that offline trends have a way of affecting your online PR. In fact, I also recommend not just reading industry specific publications, blogs or ezines, but those from the publishing industry as well. Why? Many of the trend pieces will affect you as well. By staying current, the articles or blogs that you circulate on the Net will quickly become known as relevant, in-the-know pieces.

Understanding Social Media

So where does the term "social media" fall into this equation and what does it mean? Social media is an umbrella term that defines everything from Facebook, YouTube, Squidoo, Twitter, Podcasts, Digg, Delicious, and everything in between. Social media means people having conversations online. So how popular is social media? In 2007 Time Magazine reported that social networking sites were more popular than adult content sites which have ruled Internet popularity for as long as anyone can remember.

The growth of social media has changed the way we gather news and the way that news is absorbed and discriminated. The November 2008 terror attacks in India are an example of this. Before CNN could even break the story reports were circulated on Twitter from people on the ground who were sending messages to this site in real time. It's changed our media window from hours to minutes. Another example of this is the Motrin-mom story. During an unfortunate ad campaign Motrin launched a commercial that moms found offensive, one mom in particular was really upset about it and decided to blog on it. Within hours the Mommy blogosphere was buzzing with this story on their own blogs and on Twitters and social networking sites. Within 48 hours Motrin issued an apology and retraction of the ad because the noise around this online was simply overwhelming. Compare that to the Kryptonite story four years ago about the bike locks that could be opened with a ballpoint pen. It took ten days for that story to reach a critical phase and as long for the company to issue a full recall of their faulty locks. The news cycle is driven by the Internet in ways no one could have anticipated.

Want to see how the Motrin-Mommy blog piece played outline?

Here are some good blogs that capture this story:

shankman.com/the-real-problem-with-the-motrin-ads/
parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/11/17/moms-and-motrin/

So how to you capitalize on this powerful force online? Well first off, to make sense of this online world, think of it as one big cocktail party. If you walk into an event where pockets of conversation

are buzzing all around you, you're going to seek out the groups or conversations that interest you most and ignore the rest. This is what social media is: pockets of conversation. Some you will participate in and some you won't. The choice is yours and your objective is to find the conversations you want to participate in online and then make them part of your Internet marketing campaign.

Golden Rules of Social Media and Internet Marketing

1. Listen: listen and observe, see what's being said online and how you can participate
2. Participate: join in, share stuff, be helpful
3. Give first, ask later. The best rule of thumb is to give more than you take.
4. Dialog: communicate, remember the cocktail party example
5. Don't try and do everything: it's not always a great idea to have 35 social networking sites. Get only as many as you can manage
6. Leave your wallet at the door: don't show up online wanting to make money. Show up ready to share and enlighten. This will take you much further.
7. Don't be afraid to share your opinion.
8. Be honest: it's tempting for some to embellish or lie. Who's gonna find out about it, right? Wrong. The Internet has a way of sifting out the fake stuff and embracing the real messages.

Different Ways to Promote Yourself

There are numerous ways to promote yourself online but they generally fall into two categories: paid online marketing and organic marketing. Paid marketing is obvious: Google Adwords, banner ads, etc. Organic marketing is what this book is about. Why do I stay away from paid

online marketing? Because it's much riskier. First off we are inundated with over 3,000 ads each day and further, we pay attention to very few of them. A Nielsen Trust in Advertising Report (October 2007) cited the following stunning statistics:

- Less than 18 percent of ads result in positive return on investment
- Only 14 percent of consumers trust advertisements.

If those numbers don't convince you consider this: consumers have the ability to block inbound marketing like never before thanks to pop-up blockers, TiVo and caller ID. Blocking marketing has become part of our culture and this trend will only increase as ads become more aggressive (because some companies will just never get that outbound marketing no longer works). When you compare this to another stunning figure the report revealed and it's that 78 percent of consumers trust recommendations from other consumers which is why organic marketing and harnessing the power of social media makes sense. People who surf according to consumer preferences and not ads tend to have a higher education, you'll also get more traffic to your site and your ranking will improve which will help your searches overall.

Touring Your Book on the Net

"Almost overnight, the Internet's gone from a technical wonder to a business must."—Bill Schrader

What happens if you build a Web site and no one shows up? You spent hundreds, maybe thousands, of dollars on a site that gets a few visitors at best and certainly isn't selling your books. For the most part, authors assume that Internet promotion stops once their site is up. But the harsh truth is that with all the sites popping up every day, yours will likely get lost in the shuffle unless you promote it.

If the thought of virtual promotion is confusing, think of it this way: let's say you build a wonderful store in the middle of an Iowa cornfield. The only problem is there are no roads leading to it. A tour on the Net is like paving a superhighway to your "store," and to tell you the truth, it's really the only way surfers will find you.

To begin your own tour, you need to have a good understanding of who your audience is and where they hang out on the Net. For some readers it will be in blogs (also called Weblogs), for others it might be chat groups, message boards, social networking sites, video sites, or discussion groups, but for most, it's a combination of all of these. Whatever it is, you should be able to begin tracking them down by doing a quick Google search on your topic or market. Your first search

will bring you back a slew of sites, some of them great and some of them not-so-great.

The first portion of the tour will take the most time because you're going to have to investigate the sites to see how effective they might be in your promotional efforts. One way to gauge this is to see what their Google page rank is. You can type the site into the following link and get a fairly good idea of where they rank: **www.mygooglepagerank.com** or you can load the Google toolbar into your Internet Explorer browser and get results each time you land on a page. Few sites will rank 10, but if the sites you're looking at are 5 and above, you're generally in the ballpark of sites worthy of a pitch. We will typically toss back anything that's 4 and below, unless the topic is very niche and the sites don't get lots of hits because of a smaller market.

Once you have your list of sites, you'll need to begin pitching them. Most often this is the area where authors get stuck because they're focused on selling their books. Regardless of who you're pitching, you should never, ever sell your book. Always sell what your book can do for the reader, and believe me, Web sites, blogs, chat groups and discussion forums are always looking for books that will appeal to their demographic.

As you're pulling together your tour, don't overlook ezine article banks (which we'll cover in more detail shortly). These can be powerful too. If you're unfamiliar with them, take a peek at Article City (**www.articlecity.com**), and you'll see what I mean. This site archives hundreds of thousands of articles just waiting to be selected and placed in ezines. The good thing about this is that you never know the size of the ezine you'll get placed in. It could have a readership of 500 or 20,000.

Another good reason to do article submission is for the incoming links. Most of the main search engines change their algorithms quite frequently, which causes sites to go up and down in ranking. However, incoming links from Web sites, chats, blogs and article placement can

help give a site a more consistent ranking, rather than being at the mercy of an algorithm change.

And no virtual tour would be complete without a Web site, so let's circle back to where we started, that all-important author site. Do you have one? If you don't, you should not begin your virtual tour until you do. If you do have one, take a long, hard look at your site and see if it's ready for virtual exposure.

Links Rule!

Getting links to your site is one of the best things you can do for your search engine ranking, and the best place to get them is to find out who's linking to your competition and then go after them as well. If you're imagining countless hours spent sifting through Web sites and linkbacks, here's a neat little trick that will save you a lot of time. Go to your favorite search engine and type in **link:www.competitor.com**—replacing the word *competitor* with the URL of the competitor you're targeting. The search will pop back all the sites that link to them, it's that easy!

Getting to know your reader is one of the most important components of any campaign, and it's especially true when you're trying to go from a ho-hum Web site to one that's making the grade and converting visitors into customers. Do you know what your site conversion rate is? If you don't, you should. Ask your Web designer or site host for this information. It's typically delivered in something called an Urchin report, which is fairly easy to read, and a wealth of information. Consider getting your site Internet ready before you launch your tour, if it's not up to par. If you're spending all this time sending folks to your site, you'll want them to convert into buyers, otherwise your time spent on the Net is wasted.

Unlike a real tour around the country, a virtual tour isn't associated with any timeline per se and it's certainly not as expensive as the cost of travel and lodging. The impact from a tour, however, can be felt for a long time. The reason for this is that unlike print or broadcast media, every step you take on the Net leaves a footprint. And the more footprints you have, the more times you'll come up in a search, and the more hits you'll get on your site.

Also, consider this: the impact of going directly to your audience cannot be overstated. Rarely are you given the opportunity to gain direct access to your readers the way you can on the Net. You can't accomplish this in a bookstore or even in the best news piece. And while traditional media and bookstore placement offer great promotional leverage, the Net offers something that no other marketing programs do: a direct pipeline to your readers. So if you haven't "gone virtual" you should consider it. No marketing campaign is complete without it.

Your Red Hot Internet Publicity Toolkit

Web Sites and Other
Wonders of the Net

"If Al Gore invented the Internet,
I invented spell check."—Dan Quayle

Building a Billboard Instead of a Web Site

"While modern technology has given people powerful new communication tools, it apparently can do nothing to alter the fact that many people have nothing useful to say."—Leo Gomes

Did you know that most authors get a Web site because they feel they have to? To many authors, it's sort of a fad along the lines of torn jeans or that faded Stones T-shirt. Many times in fact, authors will put up a Web site and then act surprised when people actually visit. Isn't that the point? Well, sort of. Going back to why authors put up a site (because they have to) it then makes sense that the site they put up quickly gets forgotten.

In my line of work, I refer out Web site designers but more often than not, authors will ask their nephew or son to design it for them. Now this is fine if your relatives *are* actual designers, but most of the time they have just bootlegged a copy of Dreamweaver and tinkered with it a bit, enough so they know their way around a little. Not enough to make them a full-fledged designer, but certainly enough to make them dangerous. They probably won't start blowing up small countries just because they hit the wrong button on Dreamweaver, but a poorly designed site could cost a ton of sales.

Do you remember that old game, Operation? I loved playing it as a

kid but I always kept touching the sides of the openings to pull out the patient's organs. It never failed, that darned buzzer would go off and I'd have to start again. I played and played and played that game until I could pull out that guy's brain in my sleep. So listen, if you ever have to have surgery of *any* kind, I would like to perform it for you. I mean, I'm an ace at this stuff, right? I can pull plastic kidneys and hearts out of a smiling plastic victim with little or no buzzer anymore.

Why We Hate Pop-ups and Why You Should Have One on Your Site

Everyone says they hate pop-ups, but statistically they've been proven to be effective. Pop-ups are particularly good for 1) getting mailing list sign-ups; 2) giving away a free report; and 3) offering a special on the page visitors are about to leave.

An important point, though, is to create a visually interesting pop-up, and one that offers something for free. If people are willing to give you their name and e-mail, you need to be willing to give them something of value, too.

I'm betting money despite my talent with this game, you'd never let me operate on you. You'd at least want to hire someone with a degree, right? In fact, I'm betting you wouldn't even want a new doc, fresh out of grad school, would you? Now while Web site design might be a long way off from brain surgery, if you're sinking a lot of money into a marketing campaign and have a site that looks, well, like it needs surgery, then you might be losing money. The kind of money that could feed future marketing efforts. There's also the consideration of the designers that offer a lot for very little money. This might seem like a great idea at the onset, but dig a little deeper and you might find that for all the money you paid (even if the price was great) you've ended up

with a site that isn't doing what you need it to. If that's the case, your money was wasted.

If I sound preachy, it's for a reason: I once used to design my own Web site. Yes, I confess. I am guilty of this. I thought: "I don't need no stinkin' designer," but I learned and I learned the hard way. I had a site that wasn't converting and basically looked like a dog had designed it after a three-day tequila bender. Some days I look at old Webshots of it and wonder "what was I thinking?" Thankfully it's gone, burned to the ground and rebuilt in a site that can stand the test of effectiveness and conversion. It only took me four years to get there.

The Secret to Getting a Higher Listing on Google

Trying to get Google to notice you? Well, there might be a solution. There is a quick process you can go through to get a higher listing, some even say a very high listing, but Internet experts will caution you that your category can often determine where you fall in the ranking. Still, it's worth a shot. Head on over to **www.smartzville.com/google-homepage.htm** for more information.

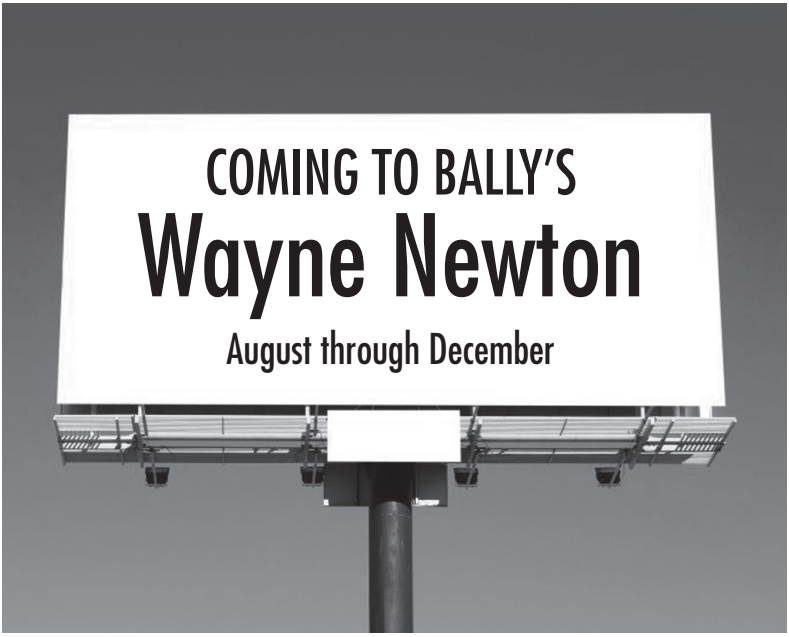
Yes, site design is a process. I'm not saying that you need to spend four years tinkering with your site. This section alone will save you at least three years and ten months. But you do need to hire the right people for your site, and hire people who don't just put together beautiful sites—because beautiful sites don't convert. I'm not saying that your site needs to be ugly or look like your first car; there's a line between effectiveness and attractiveness.

We're going to cover that line in this chapter as well as all the pieces you need to put together a site that's exactly what you need. No more, no less. In fact, we'll even determine what you need with our handy-dandy questionnaire. The only thing you'll need to do is hire the

right person to build your site, and we've got that covered, too, in our "Ten Questions to Ask Before Hiring a Designer." So now sit back and grab that highlighter. We're ready to send you off on the super highway of Web site success!

Building Billboards

Have you ever taken the drive to Las Vegas? If you have, you know that there's a stretch on the 15 freeway that's just barren desert with you, sand, a cactus or two, a vulture hoping to get lucky and billboard after billboard. You're anxious to get to Las Vegas and hit the blackjack tables so you speed down this stretch of highway as fast as you can, passing billboards at probably eighty-five miles an hour. Most of the billboards you see will be fairly simple and easy to read. Like this one:



Now that was easy, right? Fairly straightforward, not too much to read. Then you pass another billboard:

Now if you've tried to read this going eighty five miles an hour, you've probably rammed your car into the billboard and made some vulture very, very happy.

Think of Your Site as a Billboard

If you think of your Web site as a billboard instead of a Web site, you'll be much further along than most people. Why? Because at the rate people surf these days, you might as well be speeding to Vegas. Studies have shown that the average surfer used to spend seven seconds on a Web site before deciding whether or not to click off; now they spend an

average of one fiftieth of a second. That means that you have a snippet of time to prove to your visitor that your site is worthy of their visit.

Coming to The Las Vegas Empire Hotel

Five great new acts, we can't wait for you to see them all, we're sure you love them. And did we mention we have a buffet? It's great, you should try the lobster sauce and crème brulee for desert. And then there's the rooms, yeah, they're great too. Our rooms are fantastic, we just got new bedspreads for all of them and they're these great colors, aqua blue and red, very trendy. And you'll love our gift shop, have we mentioned the gift shop yet? Yes, it's got tons of great stuff in it too like Vegas T-shirts and plates and salt and pepper shakers and then there's the pool and sauna and our state of the art work out room and you'll especially love our Tai Chi classes that we have every evening, oh and speaking of evening…..

As surfers, we don't read, we scan, and the further we get down the road, the more we're finding that Web copy (the words on your Web site) isn't about writing; it's about writing less. We don't want to think, we just want to click, and preferably, we want to be told what to do. A well-designed site is not just one that's light on the copy, it's also uncomplicated and very obvious. Have you ever heard of the seventh grade education rule? Well, on the Net it's about a fourth grade education level. If you aim lower, you'll hit much higher in your conversion. Now I'm not saying that surfers are stupid, not even close. In fact, surfers know what they want and won't be fooled or lured into something they're unsure of. The key to remember is that Web surfers aren't short on smarts, they're short on time, hence the shrinking window of opportunity to catch someone's attention on the Net.

When we're getting a site designed, we have a tendency to want

to push everything onto our home page. We cram it full of every piece of everything we've ever done, from writing a book to the time our little league team took first prize in the nationals. Just like that billboard crammed with stuff, we want to fill every inch of our home page with words and pictures and all the kinds of things that will send surfers scrambling for the exit button. I call it surf shock: when you land on a site that seems to scream at you from your monitor. The kind of site you can't wait to leave.

Don't Turn Your Site into Publisher's Clearing House

Have you ever gotten one of those packets from Publisher's Clearing House? Of course you have, we all have. They even sent one to my dog once, no kidding. So, what was your first impression when you opened the envelope? Was it: "Oh goodie I'm going to win something!!!" or was it: "Eh, where do I put the stamps and which piece of this do I mail back?? And what the heck is this scratch-off card for?? Hey, wait, there's another form to fill out, and another sticky thing…." If you're like most people, it was probably the latter. Every time I get one of those mailings I always wonder who the heck thought these things up. As confusing as they are, people still fill them out but if this form were on the Net, the Publishers Clearing House people would be sleeping out of their cars. No one would bother to dig through a site that is as confusing as one of those mailers, so by all means avoid making your site a complex maze of clicks here and there and pages that lead off into outer space.

Avoiding Surf Shock

There are some key ways to avoid surf shock. The first and most obvious is to keep your copy minimal; the next might be selecting the colors of your site. If you have a book and an audience that resonates

with yellow, then you might want to have enough yellow on your site to "speak" to them without overwhelming them with a yellow fireball of a site! The colors need to resonate with the audience, not offend them. Pick the wrong colors for your site and you'll end up sending visitors into surf shock.

Listed below are a few characteristics of color that should always be considered when designing your graphics.

The colors on your site will affect your emotions within 90 seconds of viewing them.

- Colors can motivate or deter your reader from buying your book or product. They can also motivate, impress and persuade.
- Colors not only intensify the item, they can greatly influence our behavior.
- Keep this in mind if you're selling to different cultures: the effects of color differ among cultures.
- Color choices can send subliminal messages to your readers. What is your site saying about you? Color sends a specific message to your viewers. That said, here are a few color "translations"—find out what your site is *really* saying:

White—Stands for truthfulness, purity, cleanliness, devotion, and contemporary. White is the best color for a background color on the Web, especially for businesses.

Red—This is an aggressive color, so be cautious when you use this. Red suggests strength, sex, excitement, passion, speed, and danger. Red is the most emotionally intense color, and did you know it stimulates a faster heartbeat and breathing?

Green—An abundant color for sure, and according to industry experts, green is the easiest color on the eye! Green stands for health, fertility, freedom, nature, and growth. In business it suggests status and wealth.

Brown—Hints of kindness, effectiveness, wealth, and helpfulness.

Black—Infers elegance, boldness, power, authority, seduction,

evil, sophistication and classic. I don't recommend having an entire background in black, it's too hard on the eye, but it's ideal for text on a white or light background.

Blue—This is by far the most popular color for Web sites, especially in business, where it suggests fiscal responsibility. Blue suggests security, trust, reliability, and dignity.

Gray—Lends itself to a more serious tone, suggesting authority, earnestness and practicality. It's also a very traditional color, good for businesses that are more conservative in nature.

Pink—A fun color to be sure, and great for those fun, funky female sites (perhaps for your chick-lit novel?). Pink suggests softness, sweetness, femininity, well-being, innocence, and nurturing. Hot pink or variants of this color suggest fun, a la Sex and the City.

Purple—A royal color for sure! Purple infers spirituality, dignity, luxury, wealth, authority, and sophistication. It's upscale for businesses and favored by those in artistic professions.

Orange—While I'd rarely recommend a Web site entirely in orange, smears or highlights of this color can be fairly effective. Orange suggests playfulness, pleasure, cheer and vibrancy. It might also surprise you that orange also suggests strength, endurance, and ambition.

Yellow—Much like orange, you'll want to be cautious how you use this color. Lots of it can be very hard on the eye. But used in moderation, yellows hints of sunshine, warmth, cheer, happiness, cowardice, and jealousy. In business, it is appealing to intellectual types and is good for accents. Yellow enhances concentration, increases metabolism, and is the most difficult color for the eye to take in.

Your Site Is Not Starbucks

Okay, I confess. I'm one of those Starbucks patrons who orders a complicated drink. I don't know how my "black coffee" turned into something that takes three minutes to order, but it does. Most of us are

used to Starbucks by now, their complex orders and unlimited choices of coffee and noncoffee beverages. Starbucks is trendy and fun, but what if you weren't used to that? What if you were from the moon and you happened into a Starbucks for the first time? Would you be overwhelmed? Probably. When my mother visits from Belgium, we invariably end up in a Starbucks. She'll stare at the menu for about 10 minutes and then give up and just get a black coffee. Unfortunately, while it works well for Starbucks, it won't work for your site. Giving your user too many options turns into "analysis paralysis," and they'll click off faster than you can say, "double tall, nonfat, no-foam latte."

Creating a Web 2.0 Web Site

by Susan Gilbert, Search Engine Marketing Expert, JoomlaJump.com

Web 2.0 is about social connections made with like-minded people on the World Wide Web. Having a Web site built with this in mind represents having your very own social networking opportunity where you can create *your* community—and with it additional revenue opportunities.

It's like having your very own MySpace or Facebook site! Gone are the days of static brochure style Web sites that aren't interactive or don't utilize social media. What's hot are the community building aspects used in all the industry leading Web sites of today.

What Does a Web 2.0 Site Look Like?

You are already familiar with many of the free Web 2.0 membership sites: Myspace.com, YouTube.com, Amazon.com. You are also probably aware that almost every major newspaper (*The New York Times, USA Today*, etc), magazine and news service has an online Web site where they ask you to subscribe. They are essentially simple membership style sites which have login areas after you subscribe to read their articles. While you don't have to be the next YouTube.com

or Amazon.com, you can certainly use a Web 2.0 membership site in your own market or genre to grow your business. It doesn't matter what subject area your book covers, having a Web 2.0 site can open up new doors and increase both your Web traffic and your revenue.

Members of a Web 2.0 site can:

- create their own personal profile
- have their own personal blog
- have their own photo board
- have their own guest book
- make friends with other members
- e-mail other members
- comment on other members pages.

With a Web 2.0 site you can:

- provide your visitors audio and video content; easily upload your own videos, or share videos from providers such as YouTube and Google Video and many more
- keep track of your groups' events with a calendar function
- offer paid memberships and manage multiple types of payments
- charge for access to your membership sites quickly and easily
- allow members to talk to each other through forum and discussion boards on your site
- create multiple topics to communicate with your members
- create polls or quizzes easily to keep them members on your pages longer, and find out what's on their minds to better tailor your site to them
- have your members vote on photos that they have uploaded to your site; this is always fun, no matter if you are voting on food photos, flower photos or the newest member

- add a constant stream of news to keep your members up-to-date on current events on your topic
- syndicate; let other folks get content from your site by RSS feeds.

That's what having a Web 2.0 Web site can do!

As a paid membership model, it becomes another revenue stream in addition to your book, coaching, speaking and other services you offer.

As a free membership model, it represents having your very own social networking opportunity to create a place for your visitors to become members of your community.

Ask yourself this: Are you passionate about your topic? Of course you are—that's why you wrote a book. It doesn't matter if you are a nonfiction writer offering information on a particular area of expertise; or, if you are a fiction writer. You can add operating a Web 2.0 membership site to your business model.

Here's how to turn your passion into your own membership Web site… Essentially, a Web 2.0 site is when anyone registers to access information you publish in a password protected area on your site. We worked with a particular publisher who wanted an internal membership for posting information about new releases and publicity. Web 2.0 sites can help you to manage how you distribute information internally; or, to grow your readership and business with either a free or paid membership site.

Most individuals start by creating a free Web 2.0 membership, and then add enhancements for paid members; or, at a certain growth point turn the entire site into a paid only membership site

You can offer exclusive articles, information, or even a service. Remember, even if you are a fiction author—you've gotten your book written and published. Don't you think you can offer tips on character development, plot planning, etc.?

Is It Right for You?

Over and beyond the direction that Web sites as a whole are taking to a Web 2.0 model, a fair question to ask is: Why would you even consider starting a membership site?

This is an easy one to answer.

Think about this…

If you are only getting an average of 100 visitors per day to your site—if just 10 of them join your free membership site you'll have 300 new members each month. That adds up to 3600 new members each year.

That's just if you see an average of 100 visitors a day.

I believe running a membership Web site is very close to being a near perfect business model.

Benefits of running a membership site:

- keep your visitors coming back getting more traffic to your site
- stay in contact to keep your book visible
- send special offers for added sales
- give them coupons, perks and discounts so they spend more
- sell advertising on your site to third parties
- put contextual advertising links such as Google AdSense to earn money when your visitors and members click on them
- provide members only content and updates to gain loyal customers
- release new products and services to your members first for quick sales with no advertising expenses.

Once you turn your site into a revenue model, your membership site becomes a constant source of income with recurring billing. Month after month, your membership should be growing in size and revenue. Whether you have 10, 100 or 10,000 members, it will be nearly the same amount of effort involved. Run the numbers. Even if you are

charging only $5.95 per month and have 100 members, that's an extra $595/month.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you want constant & predictable streams of revenue?
- Do you want to market and sell all of your products faster?
- Do you want to build brand awareness?
- Do you want to build product loyalty in your customers?
- Do you want to position yourself as the expert in your industry?

I hope you can see that you are missing opportunities if you don't consider using a membership site in conjunction with your book and topic.

When it comes time to revamp an existing Web site presence, or when you are starting fresh, I recommend you consider adding the opportunity to be Web 2.0 oriented with your business model. Even if you don't start a membership site today, be ready to implement it tomorrow.

I decided use the Joomla platform to create Web 2.0 sites when I realized it is a ready-made model for Web 2.0 features complete with the membership modules, member blogs, calendars and much, much more of which I mentioned only some above. Additionally, as a platform that is easy to personally update without the need for a Webmaster, Joomla offers so many more services for your visitor and financial opportunities to you.

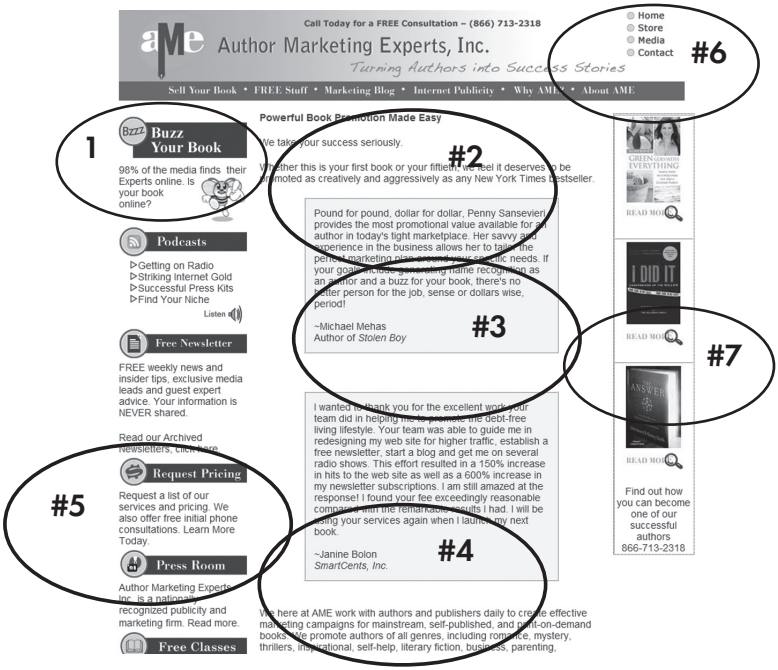
Your Home Page

The Most Valuable Real Estate You'll Ever Own

"The most overlooked advantage to owning a computer is that if they foul up, there's no law against whacking them around a little."
—Eric Porterfield

How People Surf

There have been numerous studies about how people surf. As we discussed above, people scan text. They don't read every word, but look for the most important pieces that will directly benefit them. Remember that it's all about the WIIFM factor (what's in it for me?). The first question your visitors will ask themselves is, "Why am I here?" or (even worse) "Why am I here and not somewhere else?" That's why it's key for your site to address all of these issues. More importantly, your Home page must address all of these questions and give people a reason to stay, but before they do, you'll need to understand how the eye works once it lands on a site. Here's a screenshot image of our Home Page (**www.amarketingexpert.com**)—the circles on the site clearly show how the eye moves through the surfing experience. You might be surprised at what you learn from this experience:



Now let's take a look at the site without the circles so you can get an idea of how we decided to push in our information, and what information we chose to present.

No. 1: This is the most important piece of the home page. For authors, you'll no doubt want to feature your book in this prime spot. It's the first place the eye goes to. For the AME site, we decided that since our Internet Publicity programs were hot sellers, we'd put them in the "power corner."

No. 2: Nos. 2, 3, and 4 follow No. 1 but aren't less important. Once the eye scans No. 1, it heads right over to the No. 2 spot with one question in mind: WIIFM? So, Nos. 2, 3, and 4 must answer that question for them. As you're writing your site copy, remember to think newspaper copy. When you read a newspaper, you know that the headline is the most important thing in a story, then it starts with the most important information and descends in a hierarchal fashion throughout the piece. The same thing is true for these pieces of your site. We chose a tag line that indicates that while our book promotion is powerful, it's not going to be too taxing on the buyer. We followed that with some short and snappy copy; notice from the copy that it states not only the benefits, but uses a lot of "you" and "your" language. AME found in extensive research that when authors land on this page, it is not about the company or the products we have, it's about them and how we can help them navigate the maze of marketing and publicity options.

Powerful Book Promotion Made Easy

We take your success seriously.

Whether this is your first book or your fiftieth, we feel it deserves to be promoted as creatively and aggressively as any *New York Times* bestseller.

"I wanted to thank you for the excellent work your team did in helping me to promote the debt-free living lifestyle. Your team was able to guide me in redesigning my Web site for higher traffic, establish a free newsletter, start a blog and get me on several radio shows. This effort resulted in a 150 percent increase in hits to the Web site as well as a 600 percent increase in my newsletter subscriptions. I am

still amazed at the response! I found your fee exceedingly reasonable compared with the remarkable results I had. I will be using your services again when I launch my next book.—Janine Bolon*; SmartCents, Inc.*

We here at AME work with authors and publishers daily to create effective marketing campaigns for mainstream, self-published, and print-on-demand books. We promote authors of all genres, including romance, mystery, thrillers, inspirational, self-help, literary fiction, business, parenting, relationships, and more.

No matter what your topic, your book is unique; that's why we don't believe in the cookie-cutter approach to marketing. Instead, we work with you or your publisher to create innovative promotional packages designed to place you in front of your target audience, including radio, television, print, or the Internet.

Call toll-free today for a free consultation with no obligation. We have packages to fit every budget. 866-713-2318

Notice that in spot No. 3 we added a customer blurb instead of what we can do for our clients. Why? Because what someone else says about you is 1,000 times more effective than what you say about you.

Spot No. 6 is taken up with our tag line: Turning Authors Into Success Stories. People love tag lines (when they're effective), and I think tag lines are extremely important. If you're a novelist, your tag line might be the subtitle of your book; if you've written nonfiction, be sure and make it a benefit statement.

No. 7 is a sampling of the authors we work with. At this point, if our visitors have stayed with us (and we hope they have), they're now envisioning their book on this page. We added this for two reasons. First, we like to be able to offer added publicity to our clients, but also, authors visiting our site want to be able to "see" books we've worked with. Since sites aren't three-dimensional, this is important to remember.

Web Site Copy

Save the Small Talk for Your Next Cocktail Party

"The Internet is like a gold rush; the only people making money are those who sell the pans."—Will Hobbs

When it comes to filling our Web sites with words, beginners tend to lean toward what I like to call the "cocktail party approach to Web site copy." What do I mean by this? Well, let's pretend you're at a cocktail party, you're huddled with a group of friends gabbing about everything under the sun, and around you hundreds of other conversations are mingling with your own, making the voices sound like a "hum" to anyone just observing this party. That's what it's like to a Web site visitor when you're cramming a lot of cocktail party copy onto your home page. It's confusing and it's white noise, and chances are good that it will result in a "click," signaling that the party's over and your visitor is long gone.

Two of my personal pet peeves are 1) people who want to give me every piece of instruction under the sun on their site. I don't care if I'm developing cold-fusion. If you give me more than 300 words of directives I'm outta there. And 2) don't yell at me. That's my mother's job. When you use lots of CAPS OR EXCLAMATION POINTS

(!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!) I feel like you're yelling at me, and frankly, lots of exclamation points scare me. Let's be honest, no one can be *that* excited about anything.

When I spoke to AME's Internet expert and director of our Internet Division, Susan Gilbert, she told me about the elements of good copy. "The Internet has made "brochure-style" writing obsolete." Gilbert told me. "Studies have clearly shown that people do not read Web sites—they skim them. That means your copy must be written to catch the eye—and keep the visitor on your site. How do you write scannable Web site copy? By incorporating

- lots of white space
- bullet points
- *highlighted* and **bolded** words
- images

In addition, your copy needs to use simple words, short sentences, and include the keywords your site visitor probably used to find your site in a search engine.

Writing Great Web Site Sales Copy

When it comes to the Net, "maybe's" rule. Unlike storefront businesses, you don't have to get a "yes" or "no" answer, you can get a "maybe" and still make the sale. "Maybe I'll sign up for the newsletter now and decide if I want the book later," or "Maybe I'll just get one of the reports and come back later for the book." On the Net, you may be dealing with more "maybe's" than "yes's" or "no's," so your site (and your Web copy) should reflect this sales strategy. We'll go more into depth about selling on the Net later, but for now start thinking about everything you could sell (besides your book) that will help address the "maybe" visitors out there.

Before you put pen to paper to write your sales copy, be clear about your goals. While you may be building the site to sell your book, as you start to look at the broader reach of your message, your goals

might change. Regardless of these goals, one of the best things you can do for your site is add a means to capture a name and e-mail address so you can market to your visitors again and again and again. At AME, we have a newsletter that goes out biweekly. It's packed full of marketing ideas, tips and hints for authors and publishers. While the newsletter may require a lot of time to write and create, it's worth its weight in gold because it allows us to stay on the radar screen of our customers and Web visitors. "Marketing wisdom," offers Gilbert "shows us that your best customer is your current customer. That means if someone is interested enough to visit your site, they're probably interested enough to learn more about your current book and your next book. How do you notify them? By capturing their e-mail address."

Web Copy Tip: Bring in Your Margins

No one wants to read all the way across the screen, so to combat that, we bring in our margins to keep them reading and maintain their attention span. Also, don't overwhelm them with a page that's bigger than their monitor.

When it comes to sales copy, the WIIFM (what's in it for me) factor is more important than ever. Says Gilbert: "People want to know what benefit they'll receive from buying your book. Don't be shy—tell them! Will they get an inscribed book plate, will they laugh for 6 hours, will they learn something fascinating, or will they be applauded at Christmas for all their cool book gifts? Although visitors want to know you, the person, sales copy is much more about telling them how their life will be better, safer, happier, and funnier once they've bought your book."

Once your sales copy is written, do NOT make your visitor search all over your site in order to buy your book! Put your BUY THE BOOK button in an obvious, easy-to-find space. You may be laughing now, but

we've worked with authors who buried the BUY link so deep in the site it was impossible to find!

The reality, of course, is that most authors don't really like writing sales copy, and that's okay. However, unless the world is filled with your relatives, you're going to need sales copy to sell your book. So, if you feel you don't have the skill or desire to write good sales copy, hire a professional and let them write the words that will help you strike Web site copy gold.

Size Does Matter: Picking the Perfect Font

"Yesterday it worked
"Today it is not working
"Windows is like that"
—Margaret Segall

When it comes to font sizes, many designers think that the larger the font, the more likely a surfer is to stay. Make the font too small, and you'll drive people off of your site, right? Wrong. Studies have shown that while you don't want to get too small with font sizes, a smaller size prevents surfers from scanning, and encourages a more focused viewing experience. The same goes for headlines. When headlines on a page are too big, surfers launch into scan mode, quickly skimming the page for something to grab and keep their attention.

When it comes to underlined text in a blurb or excerpt, experts suggest limiting these as well, as they are perceived as visual "breaks" and stop the readers' momentum. And speaking of blurbs, when study results were tallied, researchers found that the "hot spot" on any blurb, paragraph or header is the left side, meaning that the first few words are the most significant to any text. In fact, attention spans are so short that surfers often only stay focused on a line of text, blurb, or headline for less than a second.

The Right Font For Every Occasion

When it comes to a font for your Web site, it's easy to get carried away. Temptation might dictate that you use a fancy scroll, or a really bold font. Maybe something to match your book, right? Wrong. The challenge with using unique fonts is that the person at the other end might not be able to read it. It's sort of like when you land on a site that's full of that horrible Courier font (my apologies to all you Courier lovers out there), this usually indicates that the site is using a font your computer can't read. Sometimes, when people want to use special fonts, they'll turn them into graphics instead. But that's good and bad. First, search engines can't spider graphics, (we'll discuss the spider factor later) and second, depending on the size of your graphic, it might add to the load time of your Web site.

The trick really is to pick a font (preferably a sans serif) that's both readable and friendly to the eye, meaning that it doesn't tire the eye the way a serif font does. So, what's the difference between the two? When a Web designer talks about a serif typeface, he or she means fonts like Times or Century Schoolbook, where the characters (letters) have little accents or curves. The French word 'Serif' defines those accents at the end of the main strokes of a character. For example, look at a capital 'T' in the Times font. The small downward curves that appear at each end of the cross on the top and the inverted curves at the foot of the letter are known as serifs. 'Sans' is French and literally means 'without.' Now look at a capital 'T' in Helvetica, or Arial. The character doesn't have those little accents, thus indicating it is a 'Sans Serif' typeface.

Times New Roman T Arial T

The next step is not overwhelming your site with a bunch of different fonts. Nothing will send your visitors away faster than a site filled with different fonts.

Converting Surfers into Customers

"Never let a computer know you're in a hurry."—author unknown

Imagine this: you go to your local Bloomingdales and find that they shoved all of their product into the basement! Yes, it's true. All of their inventory is in the basement and worse yet, the night janitor locked the basement and left with the key. What would you do? Well, if you're like most people, you'd probably leave.

Another Great Quote!

"Trying to drive sales to a site that isn't converting is like driving customers to your store and leaving the doors locked; they aren't going to climb through the window."
—Bryan Eisenberg and Jeffrey Eisenberg, *Call to Action* (Wizard Academy Press 2005)

Your site is not that different from a store; in fact, it *is* a store. Think about the last time you were in a department store. If you hadn't been there before, how did you find your way around? Probably those nifty signs hanging from the ceiling or the placard by the escalator.

Either way, you were given directions, not just left to fend for yourself in the store. The same is true for your Web site. In order to drive visitors through your site, you'll need to make sure that your Web site directs them just like the signs in a department store. Figure out what they came to the site for, and then create the signage accordingly. Ask yourself: what is the number one reason people visit your site? Write that here:

The number one reason people visit my site is:

_____

What are some additional reasons they visit your site? List them here:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

These reasons you've listed should all be represented on your home page. Make sure you address your visitors' needs, give them what they want, and make it obvious to them where they need to click to get there. Remember, visitors don't want to just "click here," they want to fix something, or buy something, or find a solution to a problem they're having. Good conversion is never about you, it's always about the visitor.

Helpful Web Site Conversion Tips

If you think a 2 percent conversion rate is good, consider this: if sales

staff at Nordstrom only converted 2 percent of the people who walked through the door, they'd all be fired.

Although conversion relies heavily on good sales copy, it's also about doing everything you can to get a site visitor from Point A (your home page) through the funnel to Point B (BUY).

Factors impacting conversion include:

- doing a promotional event
- giving a guarantee
- ensuring a safe ordering process
- giving readers access to you
- social proof (potential buyers like to know that other people have bought your book and love it).

Living on Nimrod Lane: Picking a Good URL

(that's that www thing)

"URLs are the 800 numbers of the 1990s."—Chris Clark

Have you ever lived on a street where you always had to spell the name "C" for cat, "E" as in Edward, etc.? Or maybe you lived on a street with a whacky name, like Nimrod Lane (which is an actual street somewhere in Arkansas)—wouldn't you hate having to tell people: "Hi, my name is Sam and I live on Nimrod Lane." I mean, why wouldn't Sam change his name to Sue and be done with it? When you pick a URL that is kooky or fun, the same thing could happen to you. When you're getting ready to pick a URL, pick a good one, one that isn't too long or complicated, one that you can spell on the air when you get on radio, and one that people can remember. Susan has put together some tips for picking an outstanding URL:

- Be kind to your Web site visitors and pick an easy-to-remember URL. Not too long, not too short, make it Juuuussst right! And, while authors generally pick domain names that are their own name, or the title of the book, I'm more in favor of picking a domain name that contains your primary keyword.
- Because one-word domain names are almost impossible to get (think romance.com, adventure.com, etc.), I suggest picking a domain name that contains your primary keyword plus a second,

four- to five-character word. The second word doesn't really have to be relevant to your subject at all—it's just a good way to get your primary keyword as part of a domain name. So, it's perfectly fine to pick domain names like:

SciFiCrew.com
DogCard.com
LoveLeaf.com

Dot coms, of course, are preferred, but if you just can't get the perfect domain name without going to a .org or .net, go ahead. Sometimes (depending on your product/theme), a .org actually makes you look more like an official entity.

Super-Savvy Internet Tips!

- Go to **www.nameboy.com** to help you select the right domain name for your site.
- Download a Google toolbar and you'll be able to monitor the supply each time you log into Google.
- How popular are you? Check **www.linkpopularity.com** to see how many search engine links you've got out there!

Remember that if your URL is too long, you stand the chance of visitors hitting the wrong keys and ending up somewhere other than your site. Some authors put a site together based on the title of their book. Carl Palm, for example, has a site with a similar title to his book, *The Great California Story*. His URL? **www.thegreatcaliforniastory.com**. Pretty simple to remember, isn't it? For me, it was simple: **www.booktobestseller.com**, as well as my original site, **www.amarketingexpert.com**. The two are linked, so one address will take you to the other and vice versa. If a domain name has got you stumped, try going to **nameboy.com**.

Then, type in your keywords, or subject matter, and it will generate a list of spiffy names from which to choose. Make sure to include enough content to make your site interesting, and even have some material that's not directly related to your book.

URL Tips!

by Jeniffer Thompson of MonkeyCMedia.com

(www.monkeycmedia.com)

- Avoid using symbols or abbreviated words.
- Avoid using dashes—people never remember the dash, and you might send people to your competition.
- Avoid long URLs.
- Pick something that everyone can spell and that you do not have to explain. Your URL should be memorable and catchy, but also say something about your product.
- Try to choose a .com and be sure to protect your branding by purchasing all of the top-level domains for your URL: .net/.org/.com

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Creating Your Web Site

"When I took office, only high energy physicists had ever heard of what is called the World Wide Web… Now even my cat has its own page."—Bill Clinton

When it comes to Web sites, authors will often wonder if they even need one. I mean, you have e-mail, right? Who needs a Web site, it's just another thing to manage, isn't it? I like to compare having a Web site to having a fax machine. These days most of us don't give a fax machine a second thought. Everyone in business has one, and if you're not in business, you might even have one, too.

But when fax machines first came out I can remember wondering, "Who in the world would use a fax machine?" Well, as it turns out, everybody. Fax machines became a sign of credibility. Now the Web site has taken the fax machine's place on the list of credible things you can do to build your own book empire.

Defining Your Goals

Before you build a site, it's important to define what your exact goals are before you engage a Web designer to begin work. A Web designer cannot help you determine your goals, it's something you need to do and then revisit often. By "revisit," I mean even after the site is up and

you've had a chance to get some traffic and make some sales, you might find that your original goal for the site isn't serving you anymore. But your basic goals, the ones you start with, need to be clear and focused. You'll probably want to start with up to five goals for your site and then refine them in order of importance. We'll discuss more about this later, but for now, list five goals your site should achieve:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Some Great Reasons to Get a Web Site:

- Credibility builder
- 24/7 sales tool
- Create a network of supporters, fans, readers
- Promote your events and signings
- Make yourself available to the media
- Sell your stuff

Goals: Getting to Know Your Reader

When we talk about defining goals, we're not talking about defining *your* goals, but rather, the goals of your reader. Who is your reader? Do you have any idea? If you don't, you better get busy discovering who you're marketing to, because this information isn't just important when developing your site, it's the cornerstone of all of your marketing.

Who's My Audience?

Knowing your audience is also about understanding their hot buttons or emotional triggers. You'll hear me say this a lot in this book: market to someone's most pressing need and you've made a sale. Market to a need they think about only once or twice a week, and it's going to take a lot more convincing. This is why when we talk about getting to know your reader, we call it "profiling." To create a profile of someone you're marketing to is almost like putting together a blueprint for success. But a profile isn't something you create and then forget about, it's an ongoing effort and something that's constantly updated, amended and altered. Why? Because your readers aren't static. Their needs keep changing and evolving, and so should your Web site. We run a reader profile for every book we manage and we don't just do it once, generally we'll run a reader profile every ninety days. That way, while much of the information is still current, we might be able to peg a pitch on an emerging trend before everyone else catches on!

Below is a short list of questions to get you started. Generally, when I hand this list out in class, authors go home and generate several more questions on their own.

Getting the Most Out of Your Reader Profile

As you move through this list you'll see things like magazines and other books your reader reads. Keep in mind that it's not enough just to list the other books and magazines, you've got to read them as well. Why? Because you'll find a lot of hot buttons in these magazines, as well as great places to pitch yourself in the offline media world.

Your Target Audience

These answers can get lengthy; feel free to use an additional sheet of paper to complete them. Also, if you have more than one target reader, complete a set of these questions for each!

1. Where does your reader work?
2. Is your reader self-employed?
3. Where does your reader live?
4. Where does your reader play?
5. What makes your reader happy/sad?
6. What type of store (s) does your reader buy from?
7. What newspaper (s) does your reader read?
8. What magazine (s) does your reader read?
9. What radio stations / programs does your reader listen to?
10. What television programs does your reader listen to?
11. What clubs or organizations does your reader belong to?
12. What kinds of events does your reader attend?
13. Does your reader surf the Net, and if so, where?
14. Would your reader have a Web site?
15. What other books does your reader read?
16. How many other similar titles are there on your topic?
17. What points does your book address that other books on this topic don't?
18. How current is the information you have in your book? Will your book require frequent updates and, if so, how often can you update your book and / or should you offer updates on your Web site?
19. Does your reader have a military background?
20. Is your reader a parent or grandparent; if so, will this influence his or her buying or surfing habits?

Doing Research: Go See What Your Competition Is Doing

Before you run headlong into getting a Web site, I recommend that you conduct some online research first. Figure out what your competition is in this space, who's doing what, who's selling what, and what their Web sites consist of. This research will not only help you get to know

the competitive market, it will also help you determine what you like and don't like about other Web sites that are selling or promoting the same type of book.

The research is fairly simple. You'll want to head on over to your favorite search engine, plug in the keywords or phrases that describe your book or genre and start your research. It's best that when you pick a search engine to use that you stick with that search platform otherwise if you bookmark your results and want to come back to it later, you might find that different search engines will produce different results. Meaning that sites may rank differently or, in some cases, not show up at all. As you start to dig into the various sites, it will be important to define your searches so you aren't just "surfing" you're researching. For each site you peruse, you should gather the following information:

1. Web site address (URL)
2. What you liked about the site
3. What you didn't like about the site
4. Products, books, services and other e-commerce items for sale
5. Contact points (for networking or in case you like the site so much that you want to e-mail the owner to find out the name of their Web designer)

Getting (and Understanding) Your Internet Real Estate

"During my service in the United States Congress, I took the initiative in creating the Internet."—Al Gore

(He did later say: "The day I made that statement I was tired because I'd been up all night inventing the camcorder.")

Putting up a Web site is more than just getting a site—it's getting the right one with the right domain name and the right keywords. Susan Gilbert is considered one of the foremost experts on Internet entrepreneurship (often called info-preneuring), and is the author of the best-selling e-book *The Info-Preneuring Course & Toolkit.* She has also successfully launched more than 53 Web sites. Gilbert says that when people launch a Web site they often forget to define the target market for their product.

"Yes, I know you love your book, and the subject for your book. But do others?" she says. "Do your research—keywords, competition. Know who is searching for what. Then, tweak your book and/or products to match. An example of that is my slogan: 'America's Focus Expert.' Do you think anyone is searching under the word 'focus'? Not unless you are car shopping or putting together a focus group! But let's look at 'goal setting.' The Wordtracker tool (**freekeywords.wordtracker.com**) tells me that 256 people search that term daily."

She also encourages new authors to think "outside the book" when deciding on a domain name. While it's usually considered a rule of thumb to use the name of your book, there are certain instances when that's not necessary.

"My gift book titled *The Land of I Can* does have its own site, **www.thelandofican.com**," says Gilbert. "But people really purchase as they get to know more about me. So, getting your name (like **www.susangilbert.com**) is great for self-promotion. Understanding what benefit your book will provide, combined with doing your keyword research, could lead you to a Web site like I created: **www.focus4results.com**. Think about your Web site as a 24/7 store. As it gets harder for brick-and-mortar bookstores to carry every newly released book—not to mention your target customer actually finding your book on the shelf—your online store allows you to reach your target market, while also giving you a higher profit margin, since you won't be paying bookstores and wholesalers."

How Much Will All of This Cost Me?

When it comes to costs for building a Web site, these fees can be all over the map, with hourly rates for design ranging from $50 to $150 an hour. Says Jeniffer Thompson of MonkeyCMedia: "There are varying levels of designer fees out there, and while you could pay upwards of $10,000 to build a site, that doesn't necessarily mean that you will get the very best. A typical site should cost between $2,000 and $6,000—all of this is dependent on how large your site will be and what type of programming you will need. Flash programming costs more than basic HTML programming.

Think of it like a car purchase—you can get your site fully loaded, or stick with the standard economy class. There are also many good template sites that cost under a grand. In many cases, you do get what you pay for, especially in terms of upgradeability and search engine optimization. Ideally, you should shop around and find someone

whose work you like, who understands your industry and who has a good reputation. Also, if you find someone who listens to your needs, chances are you will be pleased with your results.

What Exactly Does "Building a Site" Mean?

Building a Web site, like a foundation to a house, has many stages. "First," says Thompson, "You need branding and a working concept. The only way to build a firm foundation is to know your audience. This will help you build something that will engage your readers and draw them in. Once you have a focus, you can start designing your concept. The final stage is the programming stage. I recommend that your designer and your programmer be two different people. It is best if your team works in the same office or has experience working together. A designer is an artist and does not typically think in terms of "code," while a programmer usually has trouble designing a site that works visually. With everything, there are always exceptions."

Ten Tips For Building Your Web Site

by Jeniffer Thompson of MonkeyCMedia.com

(**www.monkeycmedia.com**)

1. Avoid building a Flash Web site. Flash sites are made up of images, which are not searchable by search engines like Google. Your site should be made of searchable text and lots of it, the more relevant content you have the more likely your site will be to appear in a SERP (search engine results page).
2. Avoid splash pages (an opening page with fancy graphics that you must click on to enter the site). These flashy front pages take valuable time to load, and while we would like to think that our viewers have the patience to wait, the reality is that they will probably move on to another site.
3. Avoid using too much text, and especially avoid running it all the way across the screen. Break it up into short, succinct,

easily digestible columns. If you've got their attention, keep it. People respond well to bullet points.

4. Write copy that speaks to your reader and tells them the benefits of your product. Sell the sizzle not the steak.
5. Remember to copyright your material, and keep it current. Protect yourself.
6. Avoid using too many different fonts and colors—strive for continuity throughout your site. Also, avoid using serif fonts as they are difficult to read on a computer monitor.
7. When coding your site, avoid using images where you can use html text. Your site will load faster and search engines will be able to index your site's content.
8. Optimize your pictures. Web images should be no more than 72 dpi.
9. Be consistent with your navigation, if your readers get confused they are less likely to buy your product.
10. Create powerful title tags for each page of your site. Each tag should be no more than 66 characters long including spaces. It should include relevant keywords for which you would like to appear in a search engine. The title tag is what people will see on a SERP, so it needs to appeal to your audience as well.

Twelve Questions to Ask Your Web Designer Before Hiring

1. Does your designer know your market/industry?
2. Does he or she provide references?
3. Make sure your designer and your programmer are not the same person.
4. What is his or her turn-around time?
5. Does he or she meet their deadlines?

6. How much does he or she charge for Web maintenance?
7. Will you own all the rights to your site's design and function?
8. Will he or she provide you with a disc of your design and Web files?
9. Do you like his or her work? Ask for samples.
10. Is he or she easy to communicate with? Does he or she listen to your needs?
11. Is he or she using Industry standard programs to build your site?
12. Will he or she provide you with design comps from which to choose?

Things No Good Web Site Can Be Without

Contact Information

Don't forget to list your contact information on the home page at your site. According to Joan Stewart, The Publicity Hound (**www.thepublicityhound.com**), this is often overlooked. "If you have a Web site, place the author's photo and updated contact information on the home page. Sometimes when trying to contact an author, I go to their Web site and then search in desperation for contact info."

Who's watching you?

Is it a popularity contest? It might be.

Check out **www.linkpopularity.com** to see how your site ranks in the grand scheme of things.

Your Rockin' Red Hot Media Room

Did you know that second only to your blog, the media room should be the most updated page on your Web site? When was the last time you updated your media room? For most of us, it's probably been a while. We tend to put up media rooms and then forget about them. But more and more, a good, informative media room should be consistently updated. We've found through research, reading, and our own experiences that often it's not just the media that visits this page, that's why the term "media room" is a bit misleading. It's actually a great place to inform, entertain, and educate your reader on you, your books, your message or product, and the things you've been up to, and often it's the first place a prospective buyer will go to for more information on you and your work.

In order to compete in the digital age, more and more authors are turning to their media rooms to attract readers to their book. Why? Well it's a great one-stop-shop place to get all the latest data on your books, new editions, new products and new speaking events (should you decide to list them).

Why Testimonials Might Be the Most Important Thing on Your Site

Did you know that what others say about you or your book is 1,000 percent more convincing than any ad copy you could create? Why? Well, readers can doubt what we say about ourselves, but they will always believe our customers.

Eventually, your Web site will replace your media kit. While (paper) media kits aren't dead per se, the media is starting to find that a kit online serves much the same purpose. And if you're doing all the right

things in your Internet Publicity campaign, the media will soon find their way to your virtual door. Keep in mind that your media or press room will grow over time, if you're worried that you don't have a lot to include, never fear. The list of things to include in your media room will add up quickly, and soon, your press room will be filled with all the things the media loves. The key is to make this page fun, informative and interactive. Give whoever is perusing this a reason to stay for a while, a reason to return and a reason to interview you for their magazine, blog, or show.

The old way of doing media rooms was to have a list of your press releases, maybe a link or two to media and that was that. Now media rooms are almost the nerve center of your entire Web site. Here's a quick rundown of what should (and shouldn't) be in your media room. Keep in mind that components of a media room will vary, depending on your topic, genre and focus, so if you can't include all of these, that's okay. Better to have only those components related to your book/product/topic than ones that don't make any sense at all:

1. Downloadable picture of your book cover or covers, your photo and other related artwork you want to offer.
2. About You: people want to know who you are, so tell them! Make sure your bio is on the media room and ready to download. It's especially helpful if a media person is trying to gather information for an article and wants some background on you.
3. Press releases with live links: live links in a press release are a great way to get traffic back to your site, but guess what? It works well in reverse, too. News posted to your site gets spidered very quickly, so including links and keywords will greatly enhance the visibility of both the media room and your press release. In fact another quick tip is this: instead of placing ads, issue a press release. No kidding. Press releases

are a far better alternative than an ad on the Internet. You'll get spidered, you'll get ranking and best of all, you'll get traffic.

4. New book/product information: this is the perfect place for sharing past, current, and future information on your book. Be boastful! This is your chance!
5. Tip sheets: we all know that the media loves tip sheets, but guess what? Your readers/consumers do, too. Fill your press room with any that you've created.
6. Where you've been featured: be very generous with this. Don't assume that if you have only been featured online that you should not list that. List everything! The more you can populate this room with links that make you look like the busy marketing person you are, the more attractive you'll be to your buyer and to the media.
7. Ideas for stories: if a reporter is perusing your site looking for story ideas, why not give it to him? Creating a pop up box that says "Here's how (insert your name) can help you with your story" is a great way to generate ideas for the media and get yourself a mention in an upcoming story or feature.
8. Bragging rights! If you have testimonials or reviews, place them here, too. While it's always good to sprinkle testimonials/reviews throughout your site, this is another great place to list them. Regardless of whether the visitor to your media room is the media or a reader, people like what other people like!
9. No hunting allowed! Don't make people hunt for information. The other day I was on a site looking for book pricing. I had to send an e-mail to get a list of pricing, and why? Because it was confidential? Doubtful. But most people don't think to remove the extra steps. Shorten the staircase. Meaning: remove needless steps to the close. Put pricing, information sheets, whatever you have up on your media room so folks don't have to go on a hunting expedition for it.

10. Events: I took events off of my Web site a long time ago. Why? Because I do so much pop up stuff that I had a hard time keeping up with it. There's nothing worse than an outdated events page, but if you can keep yours up, great! Keep it current, the activity will look great on your media room.

A few final tips: don't even consider cramming all of this information onto your site if you're not going to deliver this in pop-up form. Check out **www.amarketingexpert.com/media.html** for an example of this. (Depending when you click on this you might see different information; our media room is being updated *again* as you read this.) Also, deliver your text content in both PDF format as well as in text format so the search engines can spider it.

Don't limit yourself to the items mentioned above, experiment with other media room ideas that might not be listed here. Book videos, for example, might be another great addition to your media room. The key is, start thinking of your media room as a place to present yourself not just to the media, but to the world! This will change how you view this very important page on your site and help turn a ho-hum page into a rockin' red hot media room!

Making Money with Linking and Affiliate Programs

"The attention span of a computer is only as long as its power cord."—author unknown

If you've never been a part of an affiliate program, here's how it works. You sign up for it, and place a button "click through" link anywhere on your site. Then, if someone clicks on it and makes a purchase, you get 4 percent or whatever the going rate is for that particular site. I have several on my Web site and I love them. I even do all my purchases that way instead of going directly to the site. I get paid for my own purchases. I also encourage my friends to shop that way, too. It doesn't cost them a thing, and you get paid each time they make a purchase.

One of the best places I found to get started with affiliate programs is **www.linkshare.com**. You sign up for an account and pick from literally hundreds upon hundreds of online stores. Commission Junction (**www.cj.com**) is yet another. Peruse both of these sites and see which one offers the stores you think work best with the audience visiting your Web site. Sometimes there's an approval process, sometimes not. In any event, you copy the HTML text into your site, or have someone do it for you if you're not familiar with site design, and voila. Now, you're a store.

A twist on affiliate linking is offering your book for sale on other high-ranking sites in your category and tying it into their affiliate

program. For example, if your topic is childcare, take a few minutes and search the top ranking sites at Yahoo. Once you generate that list, see if they have their own bookstore (most high-ranking sites do). Click through on one of their book titles and see where it takes you. Let's say you land up at Amazon. Look at the address in your browser. It probably looks something like this: **http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0759638241/kidscare**.

Cool Ways to Optimize Your Site Without Even Trying

- Make sure that your book has your URL on it.
- Make sure your URL is on your business card.
- Add a signature line to your e-mail promoting your book and Web site.
- Add your book info and URL to your voicemail at home.
- Whenever you're doing a book event or talk, make sure you have handouts that clearly list your URL, and maybe even give them a special bonus for going to your site, like a free report.
- Content is king—make sure your site has great content.
- Add a blog to your site, and make sure to update your site on a regular basis.
- Add keywords to the header of your site (these are called metatags).
- Check out your Internet stats (often called an Urchin report) to see what keywords people are using to find you, and then incorporate them into your metatags.

The two most significant parts to this are the ISBN number, which Amazon will list as an ASIN number (their code for ISBN) and the words "kidscare" which is Amazon's way of tracking an affiliate sales

member. To get this link ready for your book, you'll want to shave off the number at the end (as well as the "kidscare" reference) so that the link looks more like this: **http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/** . Now, replace the number that was after "ASIN" with your book's ISBN number. Take this revised URL and send a quick e-mail to the site's Webmaster. Ask him if he'd be willing to feature your book on their site, and mention that you've included the site's identifier so that they can continue to generate commissions through Amazon's affiliate program. Also include a brief book description and why it would be helpful to their visitors. This is a real win-win situation. Not only will they continue to earn affiliate dollars, but the sales of your book will increase substantially by the exposure generated from such a high-traffic site.

Keep in mind that you can also update your e-mail signature line anytime something new happens with your book or business. If you've recently been featured in *USA Today*, your e-mail line can reflect that recent story, maybe even with a link to it if the newspaper keeps their stories online. You can do the same for upcoming events, speaking engagements, and any classes or teleclasses you might be teaching.

The point here is that your signature line is not only a great way to let people know who they are corresponding with, but a great way to spread your exciting news as well!

Be Your Own Spy

When was the last time you monitored your competitors' Web sites, or even took a few minutes to look them over? If you don't, maybe you should. Get to know who else is out there sharing your "pond." Doing a periodic competitor check is a healthy way to stay in touch with other people in your industry, and to get to know the competition.

Unraveling the Mystery of Keywords

"A computer lets you make more mistakes faster than any invention in human history—with the possible exceptions of handguns and tequila."—Mitch Ratcliffe

What are keywords…really? Susan Gilbert offers this explanation: "Let's start with a brick-and-mortar example of how people buy: If you sell lumber, you could certainly build a case that people who need lumber shop in grocery stores. But are they really in a grocery store for that purpose?" she says. "If you sell lumber, you want to be where people shop for lumber, i.e. a home improvement center. Now, let's take that example online. If you have a book on how to build a deck, one of your keywords would be 'home improvement.' By incorporating the words that are relevant to your subject, you'll capture the people who are shopping for what you are selling!

"Now, keyword research takes time—don't just guess at it. Find a guide that outlines the specifics, and block out a few days to determine the relationship between the words people are using when they are searching online to how many Web sites are already using that keyword. The best situation is finding words that have a high demand with a small supply. This will give you a higher ranking and higher visibility—which will equal more sales."

Now that you have a good understanding of keywords, it's time

to check out "supply and demand" for your subject matter. Gilbert suggests that when selecting a domain name or putting together a list of your keywords, do a search for the most popular words at **freekeywords.wordtracker.com** —input one search word or phrase and the site will generate a list of other commonly searched words or phrases related to your entry. This will tell you the demand for the various names. Then do a quick Google search to find supply. Perform a search on the keywords you got on Wordtracker, and it will show you what the supply is for that particular search in the upper right hand side in the blue bar (example: 1-10 of about 2,260,000 would mean the first ten results shown on that page out of 2,260,000 listings in Google for that term). Once you've done that, create a spreadsheet based on your search. The ratio is obtained by dividing each phrase's supply number by the corresponding demand amount:

Keyword or phrase	Supply	Demand	Ratio
Online publishing	9,800,000	448,169	22
Publishing	41,900,000	77,074	544
Book publishing	8,710,000	51,916	167

Red Hot Tip!

Be cautious of the time of year that you run a search—i.e. if you run a search for holiday terminology in a month like December, your keywords won't be accurate due to increased searches for holiday shopping.

With your keyword list complete with supply and demand numbers, eliminate keywords that:

1. Have a supply of more than 1,000,000.

2. Have a supply/demand ratio of more than 20.

In order to achieve this goal, you would never find a root word like *dog.* It would need to be a keyword string like *dog names.*

Keyword Tip!

If your Web host has a statistics package, you can actually view those stats and obtain a list the keywords people have used to find your site. Once you have that list, start working those keywords into your Web site copy.

What the Heck Is ALT Text?

Back in the old days (five years ago) when most people were on SLOOOOOWWW dial-up, many people surfed the Net with the image viewer on their browser turned off, just to speed up the process.

To ensure image nonenabled surfers would know what the graphics were, Webmasters started using ALT tags, which is text that takes the place of an image. Go to one of your favorite sites and mouse over an image and you'll probably see text appear. This is an ALT tag.

Smart Webmasters still use ALT tags, even though most of the world is on cable, because folks are now surfing on telephones and PDAs, and load-up time is once again important.

The Key to Doing Keyword Research

As any Search Engine Optimization expert will tell you keyword research is a funny animal. The type of keyword research you do will vary depending on what you're using the keywords for. Article research for example will be much different than keyword searches done for Web sites mostly because people are searching for different types of words depending on what they're going after. Regardless of the type of search you're doing though, there are some hard and fast rules when it

comes to good keyword searches. Here are some tips that should help you understand, define, and implement your own keyword searches:

1. Study the marketplace: your market will tell you a lot about which keywords are popular and which aren't. The tools I describe later in this article shouldn't replace your own research. Get to know your competition by studying their marketing materials, press releases and Web sites. Often you'll find hidden data in these places that will help you narrow down your own search. By "hidden data" I don't mean data that is literally hidden like back-end text in Web site development no one ever sees, what I mean by this is terminology that might not seem like a keyword or keyword string initially, but as you dig deeper you find that it's in fact a popular search term.
2. Keywords are just that: words. They can be single words or keyword strings. Either way you'll want to find the perfect term for you. Don't get hung up on finding the single perfect word, instead look for search terms or patterns.
3. Keywords won't stay evergreen: as markets/readers change, so might your keywords. If you have a keyword or keyword string that's been working well for you that's great, but when it stops producing results (i.e. hits to your Web site, hits to your articles, or inquiries about your book) then you might be in need of a new set of words.

How Do You Find Your Perfect ALT Text?

Use ALT tags that contain your best keywords. If you're selling wine, make sure your images have ALT tags that contain words like: *wine, chardonnay, red wine, white wine, California wine, French wine.*

4. Research: If you're stumped for how to research keywords and the marketing materials and press releases you've gathered aren't helping, consider going onto some blogs in your particular market and see what you can dig up there. Look for phrases that are used over and over again. For example when women's literature added a spicy, fun new genre, the term "chick lit" was used over and over and became not just the adopted name for the genre, but a keyword term as well.
5. Use keywords sites to augment your searches: along with studying the marketplace you can also go online and use the Web sites recommended below to help you further your search. Many of these sites are free but if keywords are crucial to your campaign, you might want to think about finding a site you like and paying for their upgraded research.
6. Test, test, test. Once you have identified a keyword or string of keywords, test these words by creating articles or press releases using these terms. You'll be able to see quickly how well your words are working.
7. Use them everywhere: once you have identified words that work for you use them everywhere. As I explained above you can use them in your articles, press releases, even on your Web site. You can even use them in your social networking profile, on your page or as the name for your social networking page (this works especially well if you're using Squidoo).

Google Fight

Google Fight (**www.googlefight.com**) is not affiliated with Google but it's a helpful site when trying to determine a good keyword or keyword phrase. Plug the words into Google Fight and let them "fight" over which is more popular in a Google search

Winning the Popularity Contest: Getting Your Site Listed in Search Engines

"Three things are certain:
"Death, taxes, and lost data.
"Guess which has occurred"—David Dixon

You can list your Web site with search engines in a number of ways. You can pay a service to do this for you, you can do a mass submitting yourself or you can list your site individually at each search engine. Now, while this is the more tedious of the processes, it might be worthwhile to consider. Remember, if you make one mistake when mass submitting your site, it could take months to correct.

Let's take a look for a moment at mass submitting and individual submitting. Mass submitting is when you access hundreds of online search engines through a promotion site (like **www.addme.com**, for example). This promotion site will take you through the steps of submitting once you have completed its application form. Be wary of this. While it worked for my site, it also submitted my link to FFA's (Free For All's) and I ended up on about four hundred mailing lists. Read the fine print of your agreement with these promotion sites. Most of them are free and a great time-saver, but they can cost you in other ways.

- Promotionworld.com will mass submit your site to over thirty search engines

- Add Me (**www.addme.com**) has a myriad of free services to help you drive more traffic to your site
- Submit-it.com used to be free; now they've got some pretty elaborate packages to choose from.
- Individual submissions. When you opt to submit your site to individual search engines, you are essentially hand submitting to all these sites yourself. Now, while this may seem like a lot of work (it is), it could be worthwhile. You can focus on submitting to the most popular sites (listed below), and then add sites as you come across them, or as you feel they are relevant.

Going Granular

The truth is, most search engines love a high volume of granular content. This is true fodder for search engines. The more content you have on your site, the more likely you are to show up higher in the search engine ranking. In fact WebSideStory found that paid searches only had a slight advantage over organic searches. They also discovered that PPC (pay per click) ads only had a media conversion rate of 3.4 percent compared to 3.13 percent for unpaid search engine queries. The trick then is to post fresh new content as frequently as you can. When you don't keep adding to your site via page additions or blog postings your site will sink in results.

Research Trends!

If you're wondering what the world's interest is in your topic, there's now a quick and easy way to find out. Head on over to Google Trends: **www.google.com/trends** and plug in your keywords to see who's been searching your keywords. This system will also show you news stories that have run on this topic as well as top cities and regions that have used these search terms.

Popular Search Engines

- Google (**www.google.com**)
- Yahoo (**www.yahoo.com**)
- Alta Vista (**www.altavista.com**)
- HotBot (**www.hotbot.com**)
- Lycos (**www.lycos.com**)
- MSN (**www.msn.com**)
- Netscape (**www.netscape.com**)
- Excite (**www.excite.com**)

A Final Note on Site Submissions

If the whole "keyword" thing has got you more confused than ever, try heading on over to **wordtracker.com** or **goodkeywords.com**. Both of these sites will help dispel the myths of keywords and get you a list of words that will help push your site higher up on the search engine ranking system.

What's a Site Map and Why Would You Need One?

Search engines send out little robotic critters called spiders that track down Web sites. Once a spider gets on your site, it follows all of the links inside your site, and (hopefully) indexes all the pages on your site.

If you have a site map, spiders can hit your site map page, and then scurry out to all of your other pages, helping your chances of getting all of your site indexed.

If you have a huge site, site maps also help your site visitors find what they're looking for faster. But the truth is, visitors rarely use these. Site maps are typically done for search engines to aid in optimization and give them even more great content to link you to.

20 Simple Ways to Get Massive Traffic to Your Web Site

"The Internet is just a world passing around notes in a classroom."—Jon Stewart

Embarking on an Internet marketing campaign doesn't have to be difficult, tricky, or complicated. Here are a few simple ideas (twenty, in fact) that you can easily implement to get tons of traffic to your site right now!

1. Write articles: believe it or not this is an incredible tool for driving traffic. Well-written, relevant articles can net quite a bit of activity to your Web site. Don't forget to add your URL in your byline. Articles should be 500 to 2,000 words in length. You can send articles to sites like: **articlecity.com**, **goarticles.com**, **submityourarticles.com** and **ezinearticles.com**.
2. Social bookmark *everything*—and I do mean everything—you can bookmark each page of your site and each blog entry you post. While this might seem tedious, it's worth it. You'll see a strong increase in traffic if you social bookmark each page on your site and each of your blog entries.
3. List yourself in the best directories—you'll have to pay for this

but since most people don't do this (since everyone's looking for a freebie) you could really enhance your traffic by getting a listing: **dir.yahoo.com**, **www.business.org**, **botw.org.**

4. Get yourself listed at: DMOZ.org—it's not easy to get listed there, but worth the effort.
5. Review: if you can review hot new products or books within your market, head on over to Amazon.com and start positioning yourself as an expert. In order to do this effectively you'll want to create an Amazon profile and make sure and sign each review with a reference to your URL (your Web site). You can also go to **epionions.com** and **revoo.com** to review products as well.
6. Offer a freebie on Craig's List: you'll be amazed at how much traffic you get from a single Craig's List ad. The key here is to send people to a page on your site and make sure they have to sign up for something (like your e-mail newsletter) before they can grab their freebie. That way you're not just getting traffic, you're also building your list.
7. Create a "recommended by" list on your Delicious.com page—you can do this by logging on and creating an account at **www.delicious.com** and then tagging articles, blogs and other content you think is important to your readership. Then offer this page as a resource site. You can add a link to this page in your e-mail signature line or on your Web site
8. And speaking of your e-mail signature line…do you have one? If you don't, create one. Believe it or not, people do follow these links. You'll be amazed how many folks read e-mail signature lines. I have one and change it several times a year, depending on what we're doing or promoting or what books I have coming out

9. Lend a helping hand: you can be an answer person at Yahoo Answers (**answers.yahoo.com**)—you don't have to spend hours on there, but maybe a few minutes a week. Make sure and include a link back to your site following your answers.
10. Set up a social networking site using Facebook.com, Linkedin.com, or Squidoo. It's free and easy to do, just don't forget the all-important link back to your site!
11. Make sure your blog has an RSS feed so if you capture a reader you don't lose them if they forget to bookmark your site or blog
12. Join relevant groups at Yahoo groups (**groups.yahoo.com**). You'll find everything from groups on growing your small business, writing books, finding your passion, even underwater basket weaving. I dare you to find one that isn't right for what you're promoting. When you do find the right group, join and participate as you can!
13. Podcasting is another great way to drive traffic. Start a podcast by going to Audio Acrobat (**bookmkr.audioacrobat.com**—yes, this is our affiliate link). There are other programs you can use, but I love Audio Acrobat. You can record the podcast over the phone quickly and easily and then hit the "send" button on your computer once it's recorded and the system will syndicate it to 27 podcast directories including iTunes. It's a great way to let people know about you and your Web site!
14. Start a blog and then once you do, start commenting on other people's blogs, linking to them from your site or adding them to your blogroll.
15. Inbound links: don't squander your time (or a perfectly good link) on smaller low-traffic sites. Instead spend your time going

after high traffic, high quality sites. Good sites should have a PR (page ranking) of 4 to 6 depending on the market. You can find out what a site's page ranking is by downloading the Google toolbar which comes with a PR feature built in.

16. Start an e-mail newsletter: while it may not seem like a newsletter that you e-mail can drive traffic to your site you'd be surprised at the effectiveness of this type of promotion. If your newsletter (like your articles) is interesting and relevant to your audience, you'll find that it has a huge pass-through factor, meaning that it is passed from one e-mail subscriber to another. Also, if you have an e-mail newsletter you should never, ever go to a single event without your handy signup sheet. Yes, you can even use offline events to drive traffic to your Web site.
17. And speaking of offline efforts: if you're ever quoted in a magazine or other publication, make sure and mention your URL as it's appropriate to the topic. Don't be too pushy about this, but do not forget to tell folks you have a Web site that may be a great resource for the topic of your interview
18. If you have products to sell, why not get a store on eBay? This site gets a tremendous amount of traffic and on your sales page you're allowed to list your URL. It's another great way to get an inbound link and a way for people to find you.
19. Load a video on YouTube and 57 other video sites (if you want to know what these sites are I've listed them on my blog: **www.redhotinternetpublicity.com/blog/?p=43**—if you don't have a video or don't know how to create one, contact us and we'll refer you to our fabulous book video people!
20. While this isn't a tip per se, it's still important. If you're going to go through all the trouble of getting traffic to your site, make sure your site is converting this traffic into something.

Get folks to sign up for something, your newsletter, the RSS feed on your blog. Whatever it is, getting their e-mail address will help you remarket to them when the time is right. Studies show that visitors landing on a site often don't buy the first time. That's okay! You want to get them into your marketing funnel so you can market to them again and again—not in a way that's obtrusive, offensive or downright annoying, but in a way that is helping them with their own mission. An example of this might be an e-mail newsletter. A helpful, informative newsletter is a fantastic funnel. A blog is another great way to keep people in your marketing loop without bombarding them with "please buy my stuff" e-mail messages. Also, make sure you know what your traffic numbers are before you launch into any Internet marketing campaign. By traffic numbers I mean how many people are visiting your site. You want to know this so you can gauge a before and after view of your marketing efforts.

E-Commerce: How to Give Your Customers a Nordstrom Shopping Experience

"In God we trust, all others we virus scan."—author unknown

It's one thing to put up a store on your Web site, it's another thing entirely to *actually* sell product. Unfortunately, there are more sites that don't sell product than there are sites that do, because Web site owners are applying brick and mortar principles to ecommerce and the two just don't mix. The online experience is considerably different and a whole new set of rules applies to ecommerce.

Doing Business Abroad

If you're living, working or targeting overseas customers, it's good to remember that while 80 percent of all Web sites are in English, your Web site needs to convert to certain specifics in order to pull in international traffic.

Keep in mind that nuances, slang and clichés are all no-no's when creating a site that will have an international audience.

Use crisp and short language on your site and keep sentences and sentence structure simple.

If you want to study a good model for international English, pick up a copy of the *International Herald Tribune.*

Success Secrets of Online Selling

By all counts, the Internet is still pretty new, but in its short thirty-year run, it's changed the paradigm of our lives in ways Buck Rogers could have only dreamed. It's strange to think that our kids won't know a world without the Internet while most of us can't remember what we ever did without it. But while the Net opens up a wealth of information, it's also a huge channel for ecommerce, as the likes of Amazon have proven. Amazon soon realized that while the ease of online shopping couldn't be overstated, the "experience" of in-person shopping was a missing component. What Amazon soon realized was that shoppers wanted to get a sense of what they were buying, and so Search Inside the Book was born.

Web Site Specials

Besides offering "deals" on your site, why not add a little holiday gift box that links to a special "Holiday Sale" page on your site? This will make your visitors feel like they're in the midst of a great holiday experience and that you've picked out the perfect gift for that special someone in their life. Also, offer gift wrapping (for an extra fee) and let your shoppers buy and ship to a different address if they want. If you're not interested in gift wrapping and shipping boxes of books, hire a college kid or neighbor looking to make a few extra bucks over the holiday!

Credibility Builders

When you're promoting yourself on the Net and selling products on your Web site there's one big piece of attracting buyers you can't forget: trust and credibility. Building trust and showing that you're a

credible source is very important when making a sale. Without it, the sale might not happen. Elements of creating trust can be anything from having a secure checkout, (which is a must with identity theft being such a big issue both online and off), to having products and services that are accompanied by pictures and descriptions that give shoppers all the information they need to make their purchasing decision.

Another piece to creating credibility has to do with the method of payments accepted. It used to be that online shopping required having a merchant account, but that is no longer the case. Now you can utilize the PayPal system and integrate it with your shopping experience to give customers a number of different payment options. Giving shoppers the ability to pay using a variety of different payment methods (including check) will go a long way toward making the sale.

If you've never signed up for a PayPal account, it's fairly simple and will take only a few days to process once they've verified your banking information. From there, once purchases are made, the money is sent directly to the banking account assigned to the PayPal account. They take a small fee for processing (which any merchant account will do) and the rest is sent to the client. You can also use it to request money if you're working on a transaction that doesn't involve your online store.

If you're doing a lot of online transactions, you might want to find out whether it makes sense for you to get a merchant account and give visitors another payment option. Some people do shy away from PayPal (although this is rare), but if it makes sense to have your own credit card account, obtaining one is also a fairly simple thing to do.

Next up is making sure the site is secure; you'll need to work with your Web designer on this, but if you're having them set up a shopping or OS Commerce system on your site, you'll want to be sure that it's a secure shopping experience. A nonsecure site is the number one reason buyers bail at checkout, and with good reason—it's the quickest route to identity theft in the U.S.

Besides being able to touch, feel, or read through a product, the next piece missing from the online experience is the return policy and guarantee. You'll want to be sure and offer both of these, and state it clearly on your site. The truth is that in the online world, few people take the time to return anything, but just having this guarantee in place can be the difference between a sale or a bail on your site. A simple "money back guarantee" logo is all you really need. (check out our site for an example of one: **amarketingexpert.com/store**) I also recommend that you have a page or pop-up window where shoppers can get all the terms of your money-back guarantee so there's no question how something needs to be returned if the shopper isn't happy.

Trying to Figure out What's Hot and What's Not?

Many hot online sales are made based on finding out what's hot and then creating a product around it. If you've got the time to invest in this, it might be worth it. How do you find out what's hot? Head on over to: **www.google.com/press/zeitgeist.html** and see what searches are top ranking in Google. If you're looking for the real "hot list," this is where you'll find it. Then, create an audio, e-book or special report based on this search. The key is to sell this on a separate site, one that references the hot topic in the URL. You can easily purchase a site and host it on Godaddy.com. Most sites are up within 24 hours or less, and voila! Now you're making sales!

Let's say you're in Target, with a shopping cart full of stuff and headed to the checkout, only to discover the checkout counter isn't where it is supposed to be (meaning by the entrance to the store). So you walk around, following the signs, but they all seem to lead nowhere. How long before you leave your cart in the middle of the aisle

and go somewhere else to shop? Probably not long at all, right? The same is true online. Make checkout quick and easy, have a "checkout" button on every page they visit, give them the opportunity to add more to their cart, but also let them leave your store as quickly and as easily as you can.

The store on the site and all the pieces that go into it might be tricky if you have a Web designer who isn't familiar with building an ecommerce site. However, there are scores of places you can use to help you sell your merchandise. Sites such as Kickstart Cart can manage your sales, collect the money, and even send customers thank-you notes for their purchases.

The next piece that online shoppers miss is the touch and feel of the product, or, in the case of an audio product, being able to listen to it. That's why descriptions, pictures and even your own version of Amazon's "Look Inside the Book" is a good idea. You may not be able to mirror their Look Inside the Book technology, but you can offer chapter outlines, excerpts, and sample chapters. As to product photos, make sure they're good pictures with the right resolution (usually Web sites require 72 dpi as a minimum).

By giving the shopper a "hands-on" shopping experience, you're gaining a sale much quicker by whetting their appetite for more. But what if you have all of these things in place and your store still isn't selling? Then maybe the inventory isn't what the customer wants. Is what you're selling serving a customer need? If it's not, you might need to reevaluate your store. The truth is, we all buy on emotion, whether we're buying something that makes us smarter, richer or skinnier. Everything at some level is an emotional purchase, and the more your product feeds into shoppers' hot buttons, the less likely you are to get customers who waver on their purchases.

What you say about your product is almost as important as the product itself. Have you ever been sitting on a plane, thumbing through

one of those shopping catalogs—you know, the ones where you can only buy the stuff from that particular catalog? The minute you start paging through it, you want about five things, and most of them you never knew you wanted until you saw them in the catalog. This is an example of great sales copy, combined with urgency to buy. If you don't order it from this catalog, which is only in the seat pocket of the plane, where else will you get it?

Driving urgency through exceptional sales copy is very important. What you say, and how you say it, can be the difference between a sale or a bail. Having a spiffy product name or book title won't be enough to make a sale, you've also got to have the words and the descriptions to go along with it. Then, once the description is in place, give them a clear and powerful call to action. Make your "buy now" buttons obvious and even colorful, much like the checkout buttons, because you don't want people to have to search for these.

The final piece to the shopping experience, and possibly the most important, is the site itself. Imagine for a moment that you're out car shopping and you want to buy a BMW. You would never think to buy a car like that (or any car hopefully) in some run-down shack in the middle of nowhere, right? Well, don't let your Web site be the run-down shack where people find your product. Make sure the Web site carries the same message as the store: credibility and trust. It's not just the visual piece to the site that's important, it's also the mechanics of how easy a site is to navigate, and the small things, like misspellings or poor grammar.

Remember the last time you were in Nordstrom or a fine department store? What was the shopping experience like? Were you treated like their single most important customer? My guess is you were, because if you weren't, you probably wouldn't shop there again. That's what your Web site should be like. Give shoppers a "Nordstrom" shopping experience and you'll keep them coming back for more.

E-Commerce Savvy!

Bookstores are price sensitive, but the Net isn't—you have a better chance of selling that higher priced book on the Net than you do in a bookstore. Price is not an issue.

Savvy Secrets to Getting People to Buy

So you've done all of the above: your site looks great, the copy is stunning, you have a guarantee on your store and still, you're not selling. Why? Perhaps you haven't employed the ageless tactics brick and mortar stores have been using for years. Words like "Last Chance!" or "Supplies are Limited!" have a way of driving consumers to buy. Why? By creating scarcity, you're tapping into that "gotta have it now" mentality, and did you know that it's been proven that some consumers are driven by "scarcity" and will buy because they're afraid the product won't be available? Not because they want or need it, but because according to the store, pretty soon it won't be there anymore.

When stores use this tactic they have one advantage over you: they have a product that can be bought immediately and can be picked up and inspected by the purchaser. And while you don't have the ability to do this (other than in the ways we discussed above), you can employ a very persuasive campaign that will help increase sales tremendously. Here are a few tactics that I recommend you look into, but don't wait until sales are faltering, build them into your store page now before one single sale falls through the cracks.

1. It really *is* a popularity contest: make your book or product seem super popular. How? Use endorsements and blurbs from other buyers. Or, how about reviews from respected industry professionals? Remember, what someone else says about your book is one thousand times more effective than anything you can say, so let others do the talking.

Did You Know?

Dell pioneered the use of the Net in 1996 by using it as a sales channel and became the first company to record $1 million in online sales in 1997.

2. There's only one left and if you're really, really, really lucky, it can be yours: scarcity is driven by things like deadlines and a small number of products left. I've seen Web sites that actually have counters that read "Only 5 more in stock!" (Amazon does this, which is a great idea, it's both informative and helps drive sales). Or you can put the item on special and offer a timeline for ordering. For example, I've seen sites that have clocks built into them so it can tell what time the user clicks on the page and then counts 48 hours from that time with a banner that says: Only 48 hours left to get this special pricing."
3. If you buy this today, you'll get this and this and this: it's a common tactic when you're at a fair or trade show and you're looking at this blender that does everything but wash and wax the car. You didn't need another blender, in fact, the one you're looking at is so complicated you'll need an advanced degree just to understand the attachments. But the sales lady is throwing in all sorts of things: mixing bowls, serving spoons, even a spiffy set of ice cream cups for that homemade ice cream you know you'll never make. Before you know it, you're buying this blender and hoping to God your PhD brother will be able to show you how to use it. That's the psychology of gifting a consumer. Give 'em so much stuff they can't say no, but here's the trick: don't deplete your inventory when you're doing consumer gifting. Instead, limit your gifting to your electronic or downloadable audio products. Why? First, they can get them

right away which buyers *love*, and second, you don't have to ship more stuff.

4. Walk them through it: the bigger the purchase, the more steps you'll need to take to get to a buy. When you go out looking for a car, the salesman doesn't say, "So, can we start your paperwork?" the minute you walk on the lot (well, let's hope not). Instead, they let you pick your color, they let you sit inside, and when you're ready, they take you for a spin around the block. These are the kinds of steps I'm talking about. If you have a product that's expensive, you may have a few more layers of convincing you'll need to do. But remember, even if you step them through pages and pages of sales copy on your site, you must always have a 'buy now" button prominently displayed in case they get the immediate urge to buy. If it's not there, you'll lose a sale because only 5 percent of your shoppers will make it to the final page; most will be convinced by page three. You want to give them a chance to buy whenever they feel they're ready.
5. Credibility, rapport, and honesty: Listen, no one wants to buy from someone they don't trust, so make sure your trustworthiness shines through on your Web site. Make sure your copy is conversational and honest. And I'm not talking about just being truthful, I'm talking about showing a character flaw or two, people love that.

The Final Stage of the Nordstrom Experience

As any marketer knows, it's much easier (and less costly) to sell to existing customers than it is to try and gather new ones. Your existing readers/customers are the ones you want to continue to market and sell to. The problem is that most authors don't think this way, they believe that once they have a sale, their reader is done. This isn't true.

Generally readers are faithful to an author they like. If the author keeps writing quality work, readers will generally return for more. But in a country that produces 800 books a day, it's easy to understand why your message (and customer) could get lost. That's why I always recommend that authors build "sticky" stuff into their Web sites. By sticky I mean things that will keep readers coming back. Here are a few to consider:

1. An e-mail newsletter
2. A syndication feed on your blog
3. A monthly or quarterly contest readers have to sign up for in order to enter
4. E-mail address capture at time of sale
5. Capture e-mail addresses at any and all events you do that relate to your book

Black Monday

We're all familiar with Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving when retailers (are supposed to) make their biggest sales numbers, but did you know that the Monday after the Thanksgiving holiday is now called Black Monday? Why? Because online retailers report a steady climb in online sales. In fact, sales in 2005 jumped by 23 percent! Studies show that more and more people are foregoing the traditional "wait in line" shopping and doing all their shopping in the comfort of their own home or workplace. The spike in Black Monday sales occurs around the noon hour, indicating that workers are using their lunch hours to do their shopping.

If the holidays are looming and your book still isn't in bookstores, don't despair! It's been predicted that online sales will continue their steady climb and will topple 30 percent in 2009!

To become a part of this online frenzy, make sure your Web site is selling and your book is prominently featured.

We're going to discuss all of these points further in this book but for now start thinking about what you can do to keep marketing to the people who have already bought from you. This could help keep your sales and marketing focused and easier to manage. Once you have a list of readers who have bought from you before you can keep marketing to them on a regular basis. But be careful with this. We are inundated with on average of 3,500 marketing messages a day (do the math on this, that's around 1.3 million a year) so the last thing your reader needs is another marketing message. Give them what they want, not what you think they need. If this statement confuses you, consider this: your reader may not want to hear from you every week about how excited you are about your next book. What they do want is information that will enlighten, engage, or entertain them. Regardless of the genre you're in, no matter if you are fiction or nonfiction the same rules apply to everyone: don't give your reader what you think they want, give them what they need.

People Don't Books, They Buy Benefits

When was the last time you walked into a book store picked up the first book you found and bought it? Unless the book was the one you came in there for it's likely you've never done this. Most people don't buy that way. They buy a benefit, not a book, they also don't buy features which is where a lot of authors get stuck. They market the features of their book and not the benefits. Here is an example:

"There are tons of forms in this book!" The reader is thinking: "Forms? Why do I need forms? That sounds like work!"

Or:

"The pictures are all in full color!" Again, your reader is going to wonder: "Hmmm, why am I going to care about that?"

And for you fiction authors, consider this statement: "I did a bunch of research to write this book!" Your reader might be impressed for a

nanosecond but will then come back to the tried and true statement: What's in it for me? So let's look at these statements a bit differently. Instead of saying: "There are tons of forms in this book!" Say: "This book is a step-by-step guide packed with everything you need to accomplish your goals!" Now *that's* a benefit!

The same is true for the picture comment. Instead of saying "The pictures are all in full color!" you could say: "The pictures are so real, you'll feel you are right there without ever having to leave your home!" And for the fiction author: "I did a bunch of research to write this book!" you should say: "Every element in this book is spot on accurate, you'll feel like you're right there in the thick of things!"

As you're figuring out your own conversion from features to benefits, ask yourself this simple question: This means that… so if your book offers quite a number of references like this one does, you'll simply ask yourself the question: Which means that… this will help you turn your feature into a benefit that will get readers to buy!

How Internet Shopping Is Like Dating

Imagine this: you're single and looking for Mr. or Miss Right. Now the day has arrived and you're meeting this person for the first time. You're excited. You've communicated extensively on e-mail and even spoken a few times by phone. You arrive at your destination, park, and walk inside. There is someone waiting at a table for you, they stand up, you shake hands and suddenly they lean into you and say "let's get married!" It's likely at this point you've probably beaten a path to the front door, gotten in your car and left, right? So why would you expect anything different online? The problem is, most people do. Here's the thing: selling online is all about relationship building. It takes time, effort, and commitment to build a lasting relationship online. This is why I felt it was important to dedicate an entire chapter to selling online. Numerous books have been written on making online sales but

the truth is this: if you aren't building a rapport with your reader it's likely you aren't making the sale either. Get them to trust you, get them to like you and get them engaged in your message: it's likely sales will follow.

Did You Know?

37 percent of interested prospects take 0 to 3 months to become customers

Less than 13% of new Web site visitors buy on their first visit

The Blog Factor

"Getting information off the Internet is like taking a drink from a fire hydrant."—Mitchell Kapor

Blogs (a term derived from *Weblog*) were originally online journals, but if you're just using them for journaling, you're missing the bigger picture. Blogs are not for the narcissistic or self-absorbed, they are instead helpful, useful and newsworthy insights into your book, your work or your message, and the best part? They're updatable from anywhere in the world at anytime of the day or night.

There are currently nine million blogs out there with 40,000 new ones being added every day. In fact, some statistics indicate that the blogosphere doubles in size every five months. Some are informative and some are just a downright waste of your time. Some blogs are nothing more than a daily glimpse into someone's life, while others are so sophisticated, it's hard to tell them apart from an online news service. Having a blog serves a number of purposes, and there's a right and wrong way to blog, but we'll go into that later.

Fun Little Blog Factoids

As vast as the blogosphere might be, Technorati reports that about 45 percent of the blogs it tracks are not updated more than every three months—if that. An estimated 200 million people have already stopped writing their blogs.

And did you know? More than a third of all blog posts are in Japanese, and in 2006 Technorati reported the most active blog in the world was in Chinese

The blogs that work best are those that are newsworthy, current, informative and insightful. Boring blogs don't get noticed and they certainly don't get commented on.

But how can you find these bloggers? Easy, head on over to a blog directory like Technorati.com (one of my favorites) and type in your topic. If you need to qualify it a bit more, such as finding the mystery genre in fiction, then you'll need to add a "+" after your search term so it looks like this: fiction + mystery. This will pop up more blogs than you'll know what to do with, and all you have to do is find the right ones to partner with. By "right," I mean blogs that mirror your topic, that accept submissions or comments and bloggers that post on a regular basis. Once you've determined this, find a handful that you feel most passionate about, and post regular comments to the blogs they write. You can also send them an e-mail asking for a backlink, pitching them a review or offering a freebie to their visitors.

Red Hot Blog Tips: It's All About You

Did you know that the "About" page on your blog is one of the most read areas? Figuring out exactly what you should put there isn't always easy but here are a few things to consider:

- What makes you an expert?

- Why you are blogging and what topics will you cover?
- What's the benefit to the reader?

Give some thought to enhancing and engaging your reader in your About page. It might make the difference between a regular reader or a casual observer.

The key is building relationships. The further we get down the blogosphere, the more and more I find bloggers are limiting ways to contact them, so when you do, make it count. Some bloggers have removed their contact information off of the site altogether, because they found themselves spending their days sifting through e-mails rather than posting on their blog. Most bloggers appreciate comments (especially those that aren't spam) more than you know. When you start your own blog, you'll see what I mean.

Blog Wild

Still not convinced you should have a blog? Well, consider this—over 79 percent of national media find their experts through blogs. (Columbia University)

Posts, Blogrolls, Comments, and Other Techie Terms

Blog posts are the individual topics you add to your blog. When you post a blog, the newest one will appear on the front page and then when you post again, the new post will push the old one further down the page. Eventually these posts will end up being archived. If you end up writing a lot of posts (and you should) the archives can get pretty long. With blog software like Wordpress (**www.wordpress.org**), you can filter the different posts into categories. The Author Marketing Experts blog is divided into several categories: marketing, publishing, newsletter, interviews. Each of these contains

posts on those particular subjects. It's a great way to keep your blog organized.

A blogroll is a list of other blogs and Web sites that you recommend, and you should always have a running list of your favorites. Also, for each of the blogs you're recommending, take a look at their blog roll to see who they recommend. There might be additional bloggers or Web sites you want to connect to.

Comments are an important piece of your blog so you'll want to be sure and turn them on to allow readers to give you feedback. Spammers love commenting though, so be warned that you might get a few (or many) spam comments on your site. Most blog software isn't geared to separating out spam comments from real ones.

Want to Find Other Blogs?

- Here are some great places to do just that!
- Technorati (**www.technorati.com**)
- BlogPulse (**www.blogpulse.com**)
- IceRocket (**www.icerocket.com**)

Why Blogs Matter

Google, the No. 1 search engine on the Net, loves blogs. So much so that if you do it right, Google will spider the heck out of your site. What does it mean to "spider?" It's when Google, or the like, searches your site's content to establish ranking. The more content you have (i.e. fresh content), the more Google will do its magic and push your site up the search engine ranking. Blogs also generally have more incoming and outgoing links than regular Web sites, and these links (especially incoming) can have a significant effect on your page ranking. Another reason blogs matter is that they are interactive, and if you blog on your book's topic, it will help to further your expert status on a particular

issue. When we plan Virtual Author Tours™ for our authors, we include as many blogs as we can into a tour. Why? Because if you can get into a good blog that's seeing a lot of traffic, you can really start to gain some exposure for your book.

Why Online Ads No Longer Work (Or Not as Well as They Used To)

Social media forces us to segment by what people do, feel and think as opposed to demographics like age, gender or lifestyle. Typically ads are run based on age and gender segments.

What Would You Talk About?

This is the question we get asked most often. "If I start a blog, what on earth would I talk about?" If your book is nonfiction, it's pretty easy to figure out what your topic would be, but if your book is fiction it could get a bit tricky—but not impossible. An author I work with has a series of books starring one character—a private detective. I recommended that he "blog" this character, meaning that the character (not the author) would have the blog. It could be the character's diary or adventures and stories—a glimpse into the life of a private detective. This would give the reader (and fans of this character) a reason to return to the blog for an update on this ongoing adventure or story.

In another instance, I work with an author who wrote a fiction book about right and wrong with a new age/spirituality spin. I advised him to blog on issues related to that—right and wrong in our society and his own personal "spin" on these issues. Some of his blogs might be controversial, but that's okay, you want to create your own "voice," your own take on a certain issue and if that opinion is controversial, all the better for exposure and for getting people to interact on your blog. Getting readers to respond to your posts is a great way to gain interest

and momentum for your blog, and (more importantly), getting people to talk about it will grow your blog like nothing else!

A Blogger Profile

Surveys by Pew Internet & American Life Project found that the blog population has grown to around 12 million American adults. That is the equivalent of 8 percent of adult Internet users. The number of blog readers has jumped to 57 million American adults, or 39 percent of the online population. Thus far, much of the public and press attention to bloggers has focused on the A-list bloggers. By asking a wide range of bloggers what they do and why they do it, the survey found a different kind of story. Some key findings.

- 54 percent of bloggers say that they have never published their writing or media creations anywhere else; 44 percent say they have published elsewhere.
- 54 percent of bloggers are under the age of 30.
- Women and men have statistical parity in the blogosphere, with women representing 46 percent of bloggers and men 54 percent.
- 76 percent of bloggers say one reason they blog is to document their personal experiences and share them with others.
- 64 percent of bloggers say a reason they blog is to share practical knowledge or skills with others.
- When asked to choose one main subject, 37 percent of bloggers say that the primary topic of their blog is "my life and experiences."
- Other topics ran distantly behind: 11 percent of bloggers focus on politics and government; 7 percent on entertainment; 6 percent on sports; 5 percent on general news and current events; 5 percent on business; 4 percent on technology; 2 percent on religion, spirituality or faith. Additional smaller groups focus on a specific hobby, a health problem or illness, or other topics.

How to Start a Blog

Starting a blog is super easy. All you have to do is register at a blog site (like **www.blogger.com** or **www.wordpress.org**) and get started. It's that easy. The blog service will link to your site; you'll need to ask your Webmaster to add a button to your home page so people can find your blog.

How to Blog Effectively

The best bloggers know that the more you add to your blog, the more traffic you'll drive there. Some bloggers I know post daily, sometimes even multiple times a day, while others post weekly. How much you post will probably depend on how much time you have to dedicate to this. The challenge is that if you want to keep driving people to your blog, you'll want fresh content.

This doesn't mean you have to create this all yourself, in fact, you can invite people onto your blog and interview them, or you can just post a one paragraph "thought" on your topic. It doesn't have to be complicated or long, it just has to be fresh. Also be innovative, as we discussed earlier, be different with your blog, have fun with it. It might seem complicated at first, but once you get the hang of it, you'll quickly become a blog expert!

Blog Directories and Search Engines

If you're looking for a great blog, this might be just the place to find it. Head on over to one (or all) of the following directories:

Blogarama (**www.blogarama.com**)

Globe of Blogs (**www.globeofblogs.com**)

Blog Search Engine (**www.blogsearchengine.com**)

Mistakes Bloggers Make

- Using the preset defaults that come with the blog programs. Instead, create your own brand.
- Not spying on the competition. What else are people writing about in your market? Remember that the best chefs eat at other great restaurants.
- Not allowing comments. You want comments, lots of them.
- Being too soft-sell. Whenever possible, be controversial, or take an unexpected stance on your topic. People love different viewpoints.
- Forgetting to create a blogroll. A blogroll will allow you to link to other sites that you feel are important to your readers. It's a great way to give your readers some terrific sites they can peruse once they're done reading your blog.
- Not utilizing submission tools to submit your blog to directories.
- Not posting often enough. Frequent posting is key here—you should be posting at least once a week.
- Turning your blog into a sales tool. Keep in mind that the blog is meant for informational purposes, not to use as an advertising tool. People will stop reading your blog if you keep filling it with advertisements.

Promoting Your Blog

Now that you're going to all the trouble of writing a blog, you certainly want to promote it, right? Well then, you're going to want to learn about pinging. "Pinging" is a way of notifying blog directories that you've got a new post. It's sort of like having an assistant going to every blog directory on the Web and telling them you've updated your content. If you're using WordPress as your blog platform, there's a spot

under "options" where you can list all of the sites you want to ping to. Let's list just a few of them here:

Ping-O-Matic (**www.pingomatic.com**)

Pingoat (**www.pingoat.com**)

King Ping (**www.kping.com**)

You'll need to visit each of these sites and add your blog information. Every time your blog is updated, these sites will start pinging the blogosphere, letting them know you've got a new post!

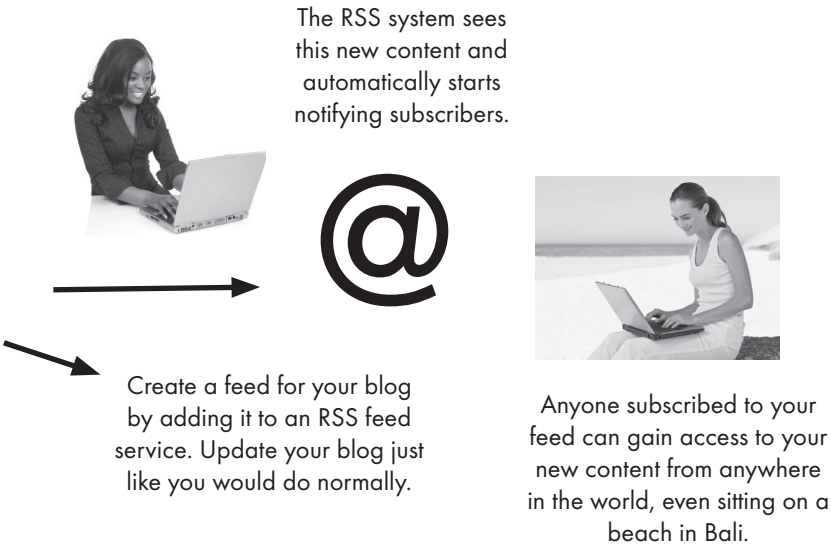
A Little Known (But Great) Benefit of Blogging

If you're ready to start writing another book, but don't know where to start, you might not have to look any further than your blog. Often, authors will use postings from their blogs to compose their next book!

Blog Feeds

The next step in blog promotion is called an RSS feed. RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication. You've no doubt seen those little orange boxes on Web sites with the XML in them, these are subscriber feeds. The RSS feeds are called "push" technologies, allowing you to push or stream content to users who've subscribed to your feeds. This allows users to keep tabs on hundreds of sites without having to visit them individually. It also lets you—the publisher of content—stay on the radar screen of your reader/customer. When new content is posted on your site, your subscribers are notified and sent either full versions or summaries, depending on the service they've subscribed to. Thanks to this online syndication, you can subscribe to a variety of Web sites and every time there's a new entry made, you're notified through whatever service your feeds are submitted to. I love Sharpreader.com, try it, it's quite addicting.

A Little Visual Guidance—How Feeds Work



RSS Feed Services

There are a variety of feed services that will allow you to syndicate your blog or podcast. Feedburner.com and Feedblitz.com are probably two of the most well-known and well respected in the industry. Many blog services have feeds tied into them, but I still recommend listing your feed with a variety of different services. This allows you to tap into any and all feed services your readers might subscribe to.

Getting started with these individual feed services is very easy, and once you're in their system the rest is very simple: just update your blog and podcast and subscribers will be notified. By adding this feed service, you're not only able to keep your readers abreast of what you're doing, but it also allows you to track how many subscribers you're getting and manage the list more carefully. Subscribers, regardless of whether they

subscribe to your ezine, blog, or podcast, should be handled with care. They've subscribed to you because they feel you have something of value to say, so don't disappoint them. Don't sell out by serving them up random ads or advertorials, unless you're endorsing a product that you feel they could benefit from, and keep your content updated as often as possible.

Whether it's a blog or podcast, the key is to stay on their radar screen. While it's not easy to have to generate new ideas all the time, consider the cost and return of ad placement. In a world inundated with ads, each year they become less and less effective. While it's a lot more work to generate content, the payoff will be much bigger in the end.

Internet specialist Jeniffer Thompson of Monkey C Media, says: "Once your RSS feed is working on your site, you have to make it easily accessible to your readers who will then make the choice to subscribe to your feed. This is why services offered by sites like FeedBurner.com are so valuable to a serious blogger. FeedBurner.com allows your readers to easily subscribe to your blog while choosing their desired method of retrieval. While some people will choose to receive e-mails, others may choose to have your new blog posts added to their Feed Readers like the one offered by Google."

If you need to establish your very own News Reader, there's a helpful list of them in our "Resource" section of this book.

Not to worry, it's not as complicated as it sounds. There are some great tools out there to help make your RSS feed as powerful as possible. But a blog has made this process easy and painless. Once you have created your RSS feed, you can link it to Bot a Blog, which will in turn give you the code to incorporate into your site. The reader then clicks on the enticing subscribe button you have so cleverly placed on your site—up pops a subscribe button, which links to Bot a Blog. Every time you post something new to your site, Bot a blog will notify your subscribers and ta-dah—you are syndicated.

Keeping the Blog Wheels Turning

All great ideas come with a price. For blogging, it's creating the content, as we discussed above. But it doesn't always have to be a grind. Let's take a look at some ideas that should help to germinate several, if not many, new posts.

1. Industry news: People who are in your industry want to know what's going on, and the best way they can find out is by asking an expert: you. So blog on news, trends and industry developments. But don't just relay the information; relay it with your own personal spin. How does this affect you personally, or maybe the segment of the industry that you're in, and how could it affect others in the same market? Also, don't just keep to industry news, often global or even regional changes will have an effect on your market, so watch for these and blog on them. Then link back to the stories you're referring to, and keep the linkbacks going in your blog. Linking to a story that's getting high visibility in the news can only help your blogging efforts.
2. Other blogs: If you're not doing so already, you should be monitoring other blogs in your industry and commenting on what others have to say. This is key, especially for virtual networking. You'll want to follow the blogs of industry experts, clients and competitors and be ready to comment, applaud or offer a contrarian view on their topic. Not only is this a good way to stay connected to those in the industry, but many a spirited debate has been born from a blog post. There's no quicker way to drive traffic to your blog then by commenting on someone else's, who is then encouraged to respond (with a link back to your blog, of course).
3. What are you afraid of? People want to know. Everyone is scared of something, but few of us dare to admit it. One of the

quickest ways to endear yourself to your readers and secure reader loyalty is to be real and to offer a voice to a genuine concern or worry. By addressing your biggest fear as it relates to your topic or industry, you're probably tapping into the unspoken fears or hesitations of others. In so doing, you'll pull in an even greater following. This is what's called "addressing the elephant in the room"; we all see it, but most of us want to pretend we don't.

4. Books, products or industry inventions: Be the first kid on your block to try something new or read a newly released book, then blog on it. When I first read The Long Tail, it not only inspired a review, it also spawned an entire article on the topic.

Remember, when it comes to blogging, the honest, genuine voices get the biggest followings. In the print-on-demand/publishing industry, there's a blogger called POD-y Mouth Girl, she's anonymous and blogs on everything print-on-demand. The blog is funny, biting, and irreverent, but regardless of her stance on print-on-demand, all POD publishers worth their salt would give one of their printing presses to be mentioned on her blog. If you want to get a glimpse of this blog, head on over to: **girlondemand.blogspot.com** (since this writing she's abandoned her blog, but the old posts are still there and still funny…).

Another Great Blog Secret

A recent article in *The Wall Street Journal* talked about homeowners expediting the sales of their homes by focusing on aspects that might get overlooked in a savvy real estate listing. In one example, a woman wrote in her blog about her garden: how much she loved it, how many different types of exotic plants she grew, and how proud she was of it. A fellow horticulturalist, who was looking to buy a home, spotted her blog and immediately put a bid down on her home. This buyer probably would have never been attracted to the standard real estate

write-up (three-bedroom dwelling), but the niche focus of the blog drew him in and closed the sale. How does this relate to your book? What aspect of your title have you overlooked? Have you zeroed in on all of your microniches, or is there a group of readers you're overlooking?

Did You Know?

Eighty-seven percent of blog readers are book buyers.

How to Get Massive Traffic to Your Blog: Tag! You're it!

"Describing the Internet as the network of networks is like calling the space shuttle a thing that flies."—John Lester

One of the biggest questions I get from authors is: "I have a blog but how do I get people to it?" Well first off, you want to keep blogging, but there are other things you can do too, and we'll discuss two of the most powerful ones here.

If you've spent any kind of time online you've probably heard the terms: tag or social bookmarking. But what *exactly* do these terms mean?

If you think of the term *tagging* like you would a name tag at a party or networking event it will start to make much more sense. Generally when you post a blog, it's recommended that you "tag" it with various terms appropriate to the message of the blog. The Wikipedia definition of *tag* is: A tag is a keyword that acts like a subject or category. This keyword is used to organize Web pages, subjects, and objects on the Internet.

When you think of it this way, what you're really doing is organizing each of your blog posts so that folks can find and search them. By tagging each of them with specific keywords you'll come up faster when someone searches those keywords than if you left your blog blank. Make

sense? Okay, then let's get started learning how to tag. (I promise, it's very easy.)

When creating tags, there are two types that you can create. You can imbed your blog with tags using services like Technorati (more on that in a minute) or you can go to social networking sites and tag your blog as well. Honestly, I recommend a combination of both.

Social bookmarking is a way of "bookmarking" favorite sites (i.e. yours) so you can easily share them (via tags) with the Internet community and especially folks who are searching on your search term. I'll explain how to get your site bookmarked but for now take a look at sites like **www.digg.com** and **www.delicious.com**—these are the top two social bookmarking sites you'll want to use. There are others but we'll discuss these in a minute.

Okay, here we go!

Simple steps to tagging:

1. Create a blog post: just write your blog, don't worry about doing anything different.
2. Identify some keywords you'll want to use: just pick some keywords, as many as you want. Don't worry about getting too scientific with this, just be thorough.
3. Create your tags: head on over to **www.egmstrategy.com/ice/tag-generator.cfm** and generate tags (this will be choice No. 1). Once you input the keywords make sure the default button is checked at Technorati. Then go to the bottom and click "generate code"—this code will get posted right into your blog. It's that easy! (Tip: Always post this code at the end of your blog.) When you're done you'll see code in your blog like this: **http://amarketingexpert.com/ameblog/?p=289**
4. Social bookmarking: simply put, you want to tag each of your blog posts in one or all of the following social networking

sites. The one slightly time-consuming piece is that you'll need to set up accounts for each of these but once you do, it will take you a minute or so per post to add a social bookmarking tag to each of them. Here are some of the most popular social bookmarking sites you'll want to use: **digg.com**, **delicious.com**, **yahoo.com** (this is still in beta but I recommend using it anyway), **blinklist.com**, **spurl.com**, **reddit.com**, **furl.com**, and **stumbleupon.com**.

5. Nuts and bolts: each of these sites has a different set of criteria for bookmarking your blog post. If you're blogging every day this might seem pretty tedious. If it's too much work to tag and bookmark each of your posts, handpick a few each week and focus on those. The idea is that you want to get these keywords out in cyberspace so folks can find you.

Ready for a final tip? If you want to impress customers with your endless list of resources why not share your Delicious page with your readers/customers? Delicious gives each registered member their own page with all of their bookmarks. Ideally you'll want to include other resources besides your own blog but a link to this page could be a fantastic way to gain additional exposure not just for your blog, but to your wealth of resources as well. (Here's my page: **delicious.com/bookmkr**.)

How the Internet Can Help You Get into Libraries

If you've been trying to get into the library market but haven't been successful consider this: the Internet might be your one way ticket into library markets around the country. Why? Because while librarians want to stock books that are popular, they are also eager to offer their visitors books that are getting a lot of buzz. So by promoting your book online you could be gathering the attention of the library market as

well. So how can you find sites that librarians peruse? Well there's not a specific list per se but our research has shown that a good blend of niche sites and book review sites is the way to go, that way you're really blanketing both the direct to consumer market as well as the online review portals.

Secrets of Striking Media Gold with Blogs

"Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day; teach that person to use the Internet and they won't bother you for weeks."—author unknown

If you're in the midst of your media campaign, don't overlook pitching bloggers, especially those who are opinion makers in your industry. Why? Because in the last couple of years, bloggers have gone from online journals and opinion pieces to newsworthy opinion drivers, and in many cases, blogs are the most reliable places to get an accurate assessment of a news item, product, or service.

One of the main reasons blogs have taken this turn is because the public is increasingly distrustful of mainstream media and media outlet, because these are often viewed as being somewhat biased and beholden to sponsors, organizations and in some cases, even the government. Blogs and bloggers are beholden to no one because they are a free, unfunded source for media. Consequently, the public is turning their attention more and more to these bloggers, and media relations professionals are using bloggers to help them further their efforts by spreading the word about a topic related to a book/author. We've seen this in our company as it relates to our Virtual Author Tours™. One of the main reasons these tours are successful (read: sell

books) is because whenever possible we push bloggers who are opinion makers in their industry.

So if you're convinced that bloggers need to be a part of your media campaign, what's next? Well, first you need to find the right bloggers for your story, and you need to remember that above all else be honest and disclose everything. If bloggers find out on their own that there are parts of this story you didn't mention, they'll address them and this might cast a bad light on you. Bacon's Media Group recently published a report on pitching bloggers; here are a few issues they address (as well as a few ideas of our own) when going after a blog:

1. Know the blog. Don't just pitch randomly, know the blog and blogger you're going after. This means reading past blogs—all of them
2. Don't worry about exclusives. Bloggers love community and aren't hungry for the exclusive like the traditional media.
3. Follow the links. Most of the more popular blogs have links to other similar blogs; follow those links and check out those blogs because they might be worth a pitch as well.
4. Create your own blog. It's that community thing; bloggers want to see you've got an active blog as well and are a joiner.
5. Personalize. As with any pitch you want to personalize, don't send out a standard, generic pitch. Even truer than in traditional media, bloggers hate generic.
6. Understand the "blog food chain." Not unlike traditional media, the bigger the blogger the tougher it is to break in, so be patient, and when you're targeting bloggers, make sure you have a blend of first and second tier bloggers so you don't get discouraged.
7. Become a source. Once you've tapped into a blog, become a source for that blogger, even if it means turning a story

over to someone more qualified. Try to stay on a blogger's radar screen with relevant tips, insights and news to keep the blogger updated on his or her (your) industry and help them make his or her own blog cutting-edge.

8. Monitor the blogosphere. Keep an eye on other blogs by tapping into blog monitoring services like Technorati (**www.technorati.com**) and Blogdex (**www.blogdex.com**). This will allow you to not only follow bloggers (who may not have RSS feeds) but also help you determine how many times your name and book has been featured in one of the blogs you've pitched (bloggers may not always tell you).

9. The mainstream media reads blogs. If you still aspire to attract traditional media air time, know this: the media reads blogs and will often consider people "experts" who are featured on a number of blogs. Also, some bloggers might be attached to media outlets, which allows them to expand on stories featured in the mainstream media and offer daily updates on particular topics.

10. Finding news-driven blogs. While you're searching for topic-related blogs don't overlook news-driven blogs. These are blogs that vary in topic but are driven by daily news items. If you have a story that ties into a hot news topic, these blogs might be the best place for you to go. (We've listed a few of them at the end of this article).

11. Saturate the market. Get your topic/story/book out there as bloggers don't need exclusivity, so you can go crazy with your pitches. But remember, the more saturated your category (for example: money, relationships, diet, and health), the tougher it might be to get those crucial bloggers' attention. We addressed doing a mix of first and second tier bloggers, but you might also want to consider doing second (or third) tier

bloggers exclusively so you can build your reputation within the online market and use that as a springboard to up-tier to more prominent blogs and catch the rising stars.

12. Separate the good from the bad. When it comes to blogs, nearly everyone has one now, so how can you find those first, second and third tier blogs while staying away from the "mom and pop" type blogs that can't really further your message? You'll want to start with a Boolean search on Google (search string: "your topic" and *blog*) and begin reviewing the various blogs that pop up. Look for frequency in blogging (daily, weekly, etc.), tone, relevancy of material and topics/content addressed. A good way to determine this is in the posting. If the postings are all "banter" about recipes, family vacations and other personal anecdotes sprinkled in with relevant on-point material, you might want to stay away from these. Why? Because good bloggers stay on-point, which also helps drive traffic to these sites. Bloggers who are just hobbyists and not opinion drivers will differ in their postings, and because of this, probably won't attract the level of traffic other blogs get.

To give your new blog campaign a kick start, I'll list a few of the major news blogs here. If any of these blogs seem relevant to your campaign, add them to your list of blog media and start following their entries:

Bloggerman (**www.msnbc.msn.com/id/12131617**)
Buzzmachine (**www.buzzmachine.com**)
Instapundit (**www.instapundit.com**)

Ready to launch your virtual media blog campaign? Ask us about our Virtual Author Tours™. Send an e-mail to: **info@amarketingexpert.com**.

Red Hot Blogging Tip!

Ready to become a celebrity blogger? Here's how: if there's a celeb doing something that ties into your topic, blog on it. The more outrageous the celebrity story, the better. If you can hang your star on something that's making celebrity news—do it!

The long-term effects of blogging continue to amaze even the staunchest antiblog critic. Blogs are a form of "water cooler" info, just like the latest TV show (before TiVo allowed us to watch them at different times). Blogs and their immediate affect on our culture have quickly become more talked about than the latest scandal on Desperate Housewives. Journalists who read blogs do so for fresh perspectives and new, unedited ideas on a story. Also, blogs tend to rank higher on search engines than traditional Web sites so they're easier to find. Consequently, partnering with bloggers (besides just having your own blog) should be pretty high up on your list of things to do when promoting yourself on the Net.

Google, Google Everywhere!

It was only a matter of time before Google (who owns Blogger.com) got into the blog search business. If you're trying to keep your finger on the pulse of blogs and the topics they cover, head on over to Google's new blog search tool. You'll love it, we did! **www.google.com/blogsearch**

The Biggest Mistakes Bloggers Make

"The Internet is a giant international network of intelligent, informed computer enthusiasts, by which I mean, 'people without lives.' We don't care. We have each other…"—Dave Barry

All right so you have a blog, now it's time to get serious. There are ways to grab traffic (readers) and there are ways to lose them. Once you have someone's attention you want to keep it, right? Of course you do. So abide by the Golden Rules of Blogging and don't (inadvertently) show readers the door before you've had a chance to engage them and, of course, sell your book. Also, the idea of having a blog is gaining traffic, yes? These Golden Rules will cover that too, and then some.

1. Letting someone else host their blog. Why? Because the idea behind blogging is getting traffic, momentum, exposure and all the great benefits of blogging. If you don't have your own URL and your identity you're really only using half of your blogging ability. Also, if you utilize a blog platform like, let's say Wordpress, and you are blogging on something controversial they can pull you if they don't like it. Now they don't often do this but it has happened. Yes, it's free and it's

great. You can still use the blogging software but incorporate it and host it on your own URL.

2. Your blog is like everyone else's blog. A friend of mine just bought a silver Toyota Corolla. Great car, but it's nondescript. Not that there's anything wrong with being nondescript, but if you apply the same principles to your blog you'll vanish in cyberspace. Get a custom blog or customize your blog somehow. Don't settle for what the blogging service gives you (standard templates and settings) create your own, unique message and look of your blog. If you don't have the skill to do this on your own hire someone, it'll be worth whatever you pay and you don't have to pay much. Most highly custom blogs cost less than $2,000.
3. You don't allow people to post or comment on your blog. All comments and posting should be welcome. Comments mean someone's *actually* reading your blog and thinks enough of it to offer a comment. Then when folks do comment, respond back and let them know you appreciate them taking time to read your blog.
4. There's a saying about chefs that goes: even the best chefs eat at other restaurants. Why do they do this? They want to know what the competition is doing. The message here is: read other blogs in your genre. Get to know these bloggers, post on their sites and invite them to blog on yours. Not only will you be able to keep up with the "chatter" out there on your topic, but it's a great way to network.
5. How you say it is almost as important as what you say. Don't talk down to people, blogs are conversational—as though you were talking to your reader over a latte. And please, don't talk about yourself. Yes, you can talk about what you're doing, share your life (as long as it relates to your topic) but if you

do it all the time it will get boring. It's okay to talk about your book, your book signing, or what you're up to—just remember it needs to be about your reader. Help them, guide them, offer them advice, insight and make your blog worth reading.

Blogging can be fun and certainly a great way to build your audience. By following these simple rules you'll not only be a better blogger, but be able to use this astonishingly easy platform to its greatest advantage.

Blog Success

Remember that your blog must be specific—if your visitor can't tell what your blog is about in the first 5 seconds of visiting, they'll move on.

Ten Tips for Successfully Pitching Bloggers

"Microsoft products are generally bug free."—Bill Gates

So the art of pitching bloggers is well, an art. Much like the media they are inundated with pitches, review copies, and suggested stories. As the Internet keeps getting flooded with new authors, bloggers are at the receiving end of a lot of new material. Most of which they won't even consider. Much like pitching the media, you should treat bloggers like gold. Don't discount them because they don't have traditional airtime. As we've talked about in this book, blogging and the bloggers who run these e-communities can sometimes have more influence than a *Wall Street Journal* reporter.

When it comes to pitching bloggers, think of them as media. As such, you'll get a general sense of the best (and worst) ways to pitch them. Here are a few tips to get you started:

1. Personalize your e-mails to them, comment on the blog posts they've ran, and never, ever, ever generalize the pitch.
2. Keep it brief. Bloggers don't have a lot of time to cycle through endless text. They'll scan your e-mail so make your e-mail scannable.
3. Highlight the benefits early on, don't make the blogger scan through your e-mail to figure out why you're pitching

them. State your benefits early and as often as necessary. Remember, it's got to matter to their readers.

4. Research the blog posts before pitching. You want to make sure that while the blog is on topic, they haven't done a story like yours in a while. Yes, it's okay to pitch them a similar topic but maybe not if they've already covered your area of expertise let's say, last week. It's likely they won't feature it again unless you can come up with a new angle.
5. Be persistent but don't be a stalker. While I encourage you to send a gentle (and short) reminder e-mail if you don't hear back, obsessively e-mailing the blogger will only get you relegated to their junk mail folder.
6. Don't send attachments, and don't send your press release. Bloggers aren't like traditional media, they don't care about the spiffy press release you wrote so don't include it. If appropriate you can lift text from it, but save the formal releases for the media.
7. Free stuff is great, but don't bribe. Bloggers will expect to get your book so they can review/discuss it and while it's okay to send promotional items, be careful about walking that fine line between promotional swag and bribery.
8. Links rule. One of the best ways to get a bloggers attention is to link your blog to theirs. Add their blog URL to your blog roll, this small effort carries a lot of weight.
9. You do have a blog, right? Bloggers like other bloggers. If you don't have a blog get one and start blogging.
10. A little gratitude goes a long way. A good part of marketing is relationship building. Saying "thank you" after your review's been posted, your interview has gone live or your guest blogging event has occurred will go a long, long way.

Google Alerts Marketing Tip

You can use Google Alerts (**www.google.com/alerts**) to keep track of your appearances on the Web, but there's another great way to use them too. By identifying and using key words or phrases that your readers/audience use you can start getting news alerts every time something is featured on your topic. Then you can see who's being featured, who's doing stories on your industry, and what blog posts are being generated on your topic. For the news appearances you'll want to contact the reporter or interviewer and comment on the story, perhaps even offer additional insight and suggest that the next time they do a story on this topic that they consider you as well. If you find blogs that are featuring your topic, target them for an interview, book review, or perhaps see if they'll let you offer content for their site.

Powerful Podcasting

"Computers have lots of memory but no imagination."—author unknown

If you're looking for a shortcut to get consumers to buy, it might be through their ears. Auditory response is one of the strongest senses we possess. Have you ever wondered why you can remember the tune of a song ("It's a small world") but can't remember an article you read in the paper just this morning? That's the power of audio. Sound is invasive, intrusive and irresistible. That's one reason why I'm always telling authors about the power of speaking engagements: sound sells. Many of us incorporate sound into our marketing plans through radio, but there's something even more powerful for you to consider, and it's called podcasting.

Did You Know?

Podcasting was named the word of the year by the editors of the New Oxford American Dictionary in 2005.

If you've always dreamed of having your own radio show, your dream is about to become a reality. It seems only yesterday (or a few

chapters ago) we were telling you about the power of blogging, but today we're looking at something equally, if not more, powerful. In its simplest term, podcasting is an audio blog and it's another exceptionally powerful way to spread the word about your book and message. Several years ago, when Internet Radio came on the scene, authors were vying for airwaves on the Net. While Internet radio is still going strong, it's also very expensive. Most shows cost upwards of $800 a month, plus show hosts need to obtain their own program sponsors. Podcasting, on the other hand, is a fraction of the cost. Here's how it works:

Podcasting, just like blogs, sits on the Internet, but instead of sitting in a written file, it's saved in an MP3 format that can be transferred to any mobile music device like an iPod. A podcast can also be subscribed to through RSS or syndication feeds. If this seems complicated, it's not. The entire process will take you about an hour to set up, if that, and once you do, you're off and running.

Need a Podcast Recommendation?

Powerful Book Promotion Made Easy: You can either subscribe to it on our blog at AME Blog (**amarketingexpert.com/ameblog**) or check us out on iTunes: Powerful Book Promotion Made Easy.

Most podcasts require an external mic on your computer, but I've started using a system through Audio Acrobat (**bookmkr.audioacrobat.com**) that will allow you to call into a preassigned number and record your podcast from anywhere: your office, your car or while on a trip! Then the audio file is saved into the system, and sent via their publication tools out to a variety of "feeds," which in essence sends the audio blog out onto the Internet. You might wonder how someone will find you and your podcast. Well, you might be surprised.

While your first recording might go unnoticed, your second and third will not. Here are some tips for getting the right podcast for you, and then getting the world to beat a path to your audio blog door!

- Topic: First, you want to find a niche, and ideally one that ties into your book or message. While topics on religion and gambling are two of the hottest podcasts right now, if your topic doesn't tie into these, it's best to stay away from them. Go online to iTunes, iPodder.org, or Podcastdirectory.com and see who's talking about your topic, and what they're saying, then plan to be different!
- Structure: How will your podcast be structured, and how much time should you plan to spend on a podcast? Truthfully, I'd recommend only 10 to 15 minutes. Unless your podcast is truly compelling or in an interview type format, listeners don't usually have the attention span to listen longer. Don't force people to listen to long-winded audios, cut right to the chase, share your information in tiplike, informative nuggets, and you'll find listeners subscribing to your podcast like crazy!
- Make a plan: If you decide to do this, try mapping out a few podcasts in advance and plan to offer your information on a daily or, at the very least, a weekly basis.
- Setting up your podcast page: When you utilize Audio Acrobat for your podcast, you'll be able to include a link to your Web site. Remember, the idea behind the podcast is promotion, so the URL you provide should reflect this. Ideally, you won't want to send them to your home page, but rather a page just for your podcasts. You can include a listing of prior "shows," as well as a way for them to sign up for future updates, your newsletter or perhaps a link to your book or store.
- Chicklets and other geek terms: So what's a "chicklet?" It's that little orange square that has the letters XML on it. You will click on

that to subscribe to a feed. If you obtained your podcast through Audio Acrobat, these chicklets are created for you and you can just cut and paste the HTML into your Web site, or have your Web designer do it for you. I copied the HTML language into my blog and let visitors subscribe that way. If you use another podcasting service, it should supply you with the language to create this on your own.

- Syndicating your podcast: If you're going to do a radio show, you'll want listeners, right? I mentioned that if you use a service like Audio Acrobat the system will send the feeds for you to about 16 services, which is great, but there's still more work you can do. First, you should consider getting a syndication link on Feedburner.com. This way people can copy your link into their feed reader (we'll cover this in a bit) and get updated every time you add a new podcast. You can access this feed service at: Feedblitz (**www.feedblitz.com**).
- Feed readers: If you've spent *any* time on the Net you've no doubt seen those little XML chicklets we mentioned earlier. When you click on them it takes you to a page of confusing text, but it's the link that you want to copy and paste into your feedreader. When we talk about syndicating a blog, this is what we mean. The reader you have really doesn't matter, and there are quite a few to choose from. If you Google "Feed Readers," you'll generate several you can try. I use SharpReader (**www.sharpreader.com**) and love it.

Podcast

In the 80s, a new dimension was added to TV called cable; podcasting is similar in that much like cable gave smaller networks a voice on TV, podcasting gives voice to independents on the Internet.

Podcasting, besides being a great promotional tool, is a terrific way for you to verbalize the passion you have for your topic. Go an inch wide and a mile deep with your message, offer helpful advice, or spout your opinion. Be creative, or controversial, or a little of both. The bottom line is this: podcasting is not only fun, but it's a great way to spread the message about you and your book. Use it correctly and you'll see even more readers beating a path to your door.

Find Yourself Online

Trying to find articles you were quoted in? Go to Google and type in your name and *articles*. Make sure to use quotation marks around your name so Google knows to only search for your name (if you don't do this you'll get a series of hits based on your first and last name, too, which can be confusing).

Going Virtual with Video

When video burst on the scene a few years ago I decided to run a test on one of my own books. I took *Candlewood Lake* to a video designer, created an outline for my "vision" of the way I felt the minimovie would unfold. Soon my book was coming to life. We added music, made a few final changes and released it into the "world." The response was enormous. Within hours of launching this video we were seeing a serious spike in book sales and hits to the Web site. Then the e-mails started pouring in: "Is this book going to be a movie?" (music to just about any fiction writer's ears), "Where can I get a copy of this book?" (more music…). Needless to say this small test showed me that video for books, when done properly can really help launch a campaign or even give a boost to an older title. *Candlewood Lake* was almost two years old when we ran this test. (You can see the book trailer here: **www.bookteaservideo.com**.)

From that point on I started to investigate this even further. Soon, companies dedicated to creating video were popping up everywhere. They were designing video that any author could use to promote their book. The problem was, no one really knew what it took to be "sticky" online, meaning a video that goes viral. Much like figuring out how to make a bestseller, knowing what makes a video viral and what doesn't is an even bigger mystery. But there are certain guidelines to follow. First, creating a home made video works, but only on occasion. Sometimes we see video that goes viral that's been homespun, this is the exception not the rule. A recent study of Internet users found that 68 percent of us prefer video that's professionally done. Second, while the *Candlewood Lake* video we did was long (too long actually) I wouldn't recommend going over 45 seconds. Why? Because attention spans are short online and point of fact is, regardless of the length of your video users will typically only watch the first 10 seconds of it before they decide to keep watching or move on. What this means to you is that you've got to make that first 10 seconds really count. Don't wait till the end to push the viewer's hot buttons, push them early and often. It could be the difference between a sale or a reader who bypasses your message. Keep in mind too that as you're designing your video it's likely the person viewing this hasn't read your book. Think of movie trailers (sometimes the best part of the movie) that are designed to entice the audience into seeing the movie. Your book trailer should do the same thing. Your book trailer, by definition, is an extension of your book. It's another product and another way to capture sales. As a sales tool, these videos can also be used to plug future books as well. Consider the "credits" section at the end of the video to lead readers to new titles, preorders, or wherever you want to send them.

The uses for video are really endless, the only limitations are that of imagination and, of course, budget. But videos don't have to break the bank. The balance of this chapter will have some insights from folks I consider to be experts in this video arena who will discuss do's and

don'ts about video as well as some insights into creating compelling video that doesn't consume your entire marketing budget.

Videos for Promoting Your Book

by Susan Gilbert, Search Engine Marketing Expert, JoomlaJump.com

Most authors think about creating videos as in book trailers which are expensive and heavily produced. But there are so many other options available to you and reasons for incorporating video promotion in your book promotion strategy.

A misconception with video marketing is thinking that a video will go viral, when that rarely happens. Videos which go viral are either exceptionally funny, tragic or as a result of a celebrity following. However, video promotion can be utilized by anyone with great benefits. When you recognize the relationship aspect along with the linking of video sites to your Web site; the fact that you are gaining links from the video sites back to your Web site, you realize that whether the video goes viral or not is secondary.

If you decide to jump on this Web site promotion fast track to success and produce an online video of your own take a moment to read through the different types of videos you can produce. There are four different types of videos you can consider: book trailers, relationship videos, Web site infomercials, and how-to videos.

Let's explore the components and purposes of each type of online video. Understanding the facets of these various types will enable you to create the most valuable online video possible.

Book Trailers

This is the format that authors are most familiar with—a short, professionally produced video similar to a movie trailer which highlights

the main points of your book, creating a desire to get the whole story by purchasing your book. Unless done very, very well, I think this is the format least likely to convert into sales. Read through the following models which can be far more effective.

Relationship Videos

Relationship videos are content rich in nature. Examples of relationship videos include video newsletters and video Blogs where you, as the expert, deliver your content in video format. Internet users are becoming increasingly accustomed to reading e-newsletters and Blogs. You can take this personal touch with your subscribers one step further by constructing videos.

You can also read portions of your book, or an article that you've written. Videos help you create a presence on the Internet and become a celebrity within your market. In addition, many customers are more apt to purchase a product or service when they trust the seller which equals more book sales. Get your smiling face out there to build trust and establish a more personal relationship with your customer.

Web Site Infomercials

The purpose of the Web site infomercial is to prompt people to take action. These online videos motivate customers to opt into your subscription list and/or click on a link to purchase an item or service. This works especially well with special offers—just like you've seen as done on television. It is critical that your Web site infomercial cuts to the chase and is *only* two to four minutes in length. This differs from a 30-minute infomercial on television.

You should have a short Web site infomercial because people tend to have a much shorter attention span on the Internet and are more active. You don't want them to become bored and click away from your Web site!

How-To Videos

How-to videos can cover how to use your product or service and will be used most by nonfiction authors. You can determine the content based on your customers' needs. Using a how-to video regarding various help topics is a beneficial idea. "Showing" customers how to solve a problem is much more effective then "telling" them or having them read the solution in print. Creating these types of online videos often cuts down on service calls and refund rates.

What Now?

After you have chosen one of the four formats above, distributing them to the multitude of video Web sites provides links back to your Web site and traffic following those links. Did you know that as of today, there are over 50 different video hosting sites and that number continues to grow every month?

Here is a list of the ones we like best at this time:

www.atomfilms.com
www.blip.tv
www.blog.com
www.blogger.com
www.bofunk.com
www.buzznet.com
www.clipshack.com
www.dailymotion.com
www.dave.tv
www.eyespot.com
www.flurl.com
www.gofish.com
www.guba.com
www.ifilm.com
www.livejournal.com
www.liveleak.com
www.livevideo.com
www.megavideo.com
www.metacafe.com
www.motionbox.com
video.msn.com
www.odeo.com
www.photobucket.com
www.pixparty.com
www.putfile.com
www.revver.com
www.selfcast.tv
www.sharkle.com

www.stickam.com
www.sumo.tv
www.twango.com
www.veoh.com
www.video.google.com
www.video.yahoo.com
www.vidilife.com
www.vimeo.com
www.vmix.com
www.vsocial.com
www.wordpress.org
www.xanga.com
www.youtube.com
www.zippyvideos.com
www.myspace.com
www.crackle.com
www.dropshots.com
www.evideoshare.com
www.mediamax.com
www.blinkbits.com
www.wink.com

Most video sites have RSS feeds that can be submitted for additional Web exposure and of course, you'll want to be bookmarking them as part of your Internet promotion strategy.

Take time to identify which type of online videos are best suited for you. Online videos are efficient and exciting Web site promotion tools that you should implement today!

Host a Video Contest!

We all know video is super popular but is there a way for you use video to engage your readers? You bet. Besides having one professionally created you could host a contest that encourages readers to create a short video about your book. You'll need to award some great prizes for this, that goes without saying, but think of the fun you could have with a video contest like this? Especially if your book slants to a younger crowd, a video contest could be a great way to promote your book and get your readers engaged in your message. To see a list of contests on

YouTube click the following link: **youtube.com/contests_main**. If you run a contest like this you should look to YouTube to be your primary host. Other video sites that can also be considered:

www.bliptv.com
www.eyespot.com
www.freeiq.com
www.googlevideo.com
www.grouper.com
www.jumpcut.com
www.ourmedia.com
www.revver.com
www.videoegg.com
www.vimeo.com
www.vsocial.com
www.youtube.com

The Technical Stuff

by Jeniffer Thompson of MonkeyCMedia.com
(**www.monkeycmedia.com**)

Lights, camera, action! Many people think of live action when they think of book videos, but the truth is you can create a captivating video without using any video footage at all. If you do decide to use video, make sure that it is professional. If you decide to recruit your friends and family to star in your mini film, be careful that the outcome does not appear unprofessional and dare I say: cheesy. It's easy to create bad video, and sadly this could reflect poorly on your story. You may be portraying your characters in a light that does lennot do your characters justice. Plus, how do you accurately represent a fictional character when the reader's imagination is often what brings a character to life? This reminds me of the time I was reading *The World According to Garp by* John Irving. Halfway through the novel my husband mentioned that Robin Williams had played the leading role in the movie. I was incensed—this character did not look like Robin Williams.

Still shots, photographs and images are often a more powerful choice for book videos. The secret is to create movement and action

through the use of transitions and video editing techniques. There is a popular technique that was made famous by documentary filmmaker Ken Burns—it's called the Ken Burns Effect. Here's what Wikipedia has to say: "Burns often gives life to still photographs by slowly zooming in on subjects of interest and panning from one subject to another. For example, in a photograph of a baseball team, he might slowly pan across the faces of the players and come to rest on the player the narrator is discussing."

If you decide to use still photographs, make sure you buy royalty free images like those found at **www.istock.com**; here you can find professional images for as little as $1 to $3. After you create an account, you can create a lightbox in which to save your selections and sift through later. Often the most daunting part of video creation is the hunt for images. It can take hours if not days to find the perfect image, so take your time and spread out the search over several days. Also, be sure to buy the right size. Your images should be around 800 x 600 pixels, or something close depending on the image. Keep in mind, you may want to crop your image, or if you decide to use the Ken Burns Effect, you will need a larger image to pan across. An Internet video is typically 320 x 240 pixels, but you might consider building yours larger so you do not lose resolution when you compress your files.

The other component to consider is voice. If you opt to include voice, you'll need a professional way to record it and a voiceover talent whose narrative style complements the tone of your video. The script needs to be simple, yet effective. It's easy to get carried away with a verbose script that becomes very complicated to produce. Consider the visuals and timing as you write. A good rule of thumb is to write a script that will not exceed 30 seconds. Believe it not, this will usually result in a 45 second video, which is about the perfect length.

Lastly, you'll need music. While it may be tempting to use your favorite song, this will likely get you into trouble. There are many sites that offer royalty-free music. Garageband.com is a great place to start

your search. You may have to credit the artist, but this certainly beats paying royalties or finding a cease and desist letter in your mailbox. If in doubt, ask for permission, not everything is royalty free.

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Ten Ways to Use Video to Promote Your Book

"Some things Man was never meant to know. For everything else, there's Google."—author unknown

When it comes to convincing a reader to buy, sometimes there's nothing more compelling than a good sales pitch. Yes, you can have excellent back copy, a stunning cover, but nothing makes a reader morph into a buyer quicker than a hefty pitch that pushes every single hot button (and even a few they didn't know they had). Video as a means to promote a book is a great sales pitch, but only if it's done right. What do I mean by "done right"?

With all the talk today about using video to promote your book, it's easy to get caught up in a YouTube-driven world. It's a great idea certainly but there's one catch: you've got to make your viewer feel something. An example of this is a recent video posted to Yahoo videos (it also landed on YouTube) about a contestant (Paul Potts) on *Britain's Got Talent*. While not an author (yet) the video shows us clearly what we mean by emotion. Don't believe me? Take a look for yourself. **video.yahoo.com/video/playvid=646496&fr=yvmtf**

The video became so popular (almost overnight) that within a few days it made it to the U.S. and into the hands of millions of viewers. Why? Well, let's think about this. If you've ever watched an episode of *American Idol* or a version of the program you know that the most

favored contestants are the underdogs, the ones who just show up and blow the judges away. That's the biggest emotional hot button on any of these types of shows and that's why the Paul Potts video made such an impact online. Of course he had talent, but talent in the absence of a true underdog factor wouldn't have made this video as successful as it was.

In fact, not only that but every major media outlet is clamoring for an interview with Paul. He's become a sensation. The video gave him exposure to people globally and it tapped into an emotion—but more than that, it tapped into the right emotion. That is key. If the Paul Potts video had been scary, or disturbing, or flat out boring, who would have cared? So if you're considering doing a book video for your own tome, don't sell yourself short by just "telling the story," do it in such a way that grabs your reader, engages them and hits them right in their emotional hot buttons. Know the triggers your audience responds to and incorporate that into your video.

Check out this video that MonkeyCMedia did for a book we worked on: **www.amarketingexpert.com/assets/html/engaged.html**

Here are some ways to make the most of your video:

1. Have you been YouTube'd? If you haven't this is the No. 1 place to load your book video.
2. Put your video on your own Web site, don't let a single visitor land on your site without getting the "touch and feel" of your book.
3. Send a sample of your book video to every media contact you pitch. Never let a press kit leave your office without a disc.
4. Got a social networking page? If you do (and you should) add the clip or a link to it on the page.
5. When you pitch the media, don't forget to insert a link to the trailer in your e-mail. Don't send it as an attachment; chances are an overaggressive spam filter will have it for lunch.

6. Blog about it every chance you get. No, I'm not talking about repeating a blog over and over but blog on what success you've had thanks to your video. And oh, yes, add a link to the book video too.
7. Trying to get a signing but have been unsuccessful? Let your book speak for itself, literally. Drop off a copy of your book trailer to an as-yet-unconvinced bookstore person and I can almost bet you'll get a signing in the store.
8. Ready for your close-up? There's no quicker way to a potential producer's heart than through his eyes and ears. Seeing a book come to life can sometimes be a great way to sell someone on the concept of turning your book into a movie.
9. If you're doing a signing bring the book video to show while you're signing books. I've known authors who've done this and they sold almost twice as many books. The video really pulls in readers!
10. Just like you can tell a book by its cover, you can often tell a book video by its packaging. Get your CD cover professionally printed, don't skim on the first impression! In fact, why not have your video burned to a business card size cd that you can pop into the card slot of a presentation folder?

Testimonials on Video

If you're getting good reader feedback from your book or product, why not capture this enthusiasm on video? With smaller cameras and digital delivery, creating video testimonials is easier than ever. In fact if you're eager to build your video testimonial gallery why not offer readers an incentive for turning their written review into a video? It's easy to create a video page on YouTube and you can use it to upload your videos.

Social Networks

"I had a fortune cookie the other day and it said: 'Outlook not so good.' I said: 'Sure, but Microsoft ships it anyway.'"—author unknown

These days, you can't go into a coffee shop, bookstore, or turn on your television without hearing about social networks like MySpace, Facebook, and Squidoo. These sites have exploded in recent years with members and an influx of money that's kept them growing.

The idea behind social networks isn't a new thing, but the concept of socializing online developed and morphed as more and more people spent time in front of their computers. The idea being that you could socialize, network, gather, communicate and meet friends in an online venue, rather than, let's say a coffee shop. Years ago, before social networks, we met people in clubs, organizations, bowling leagues. We may not have had "profiles" like we do on these social networking sites but the concept was still the same: like attracts like and similar interest-based people gathered in placed that supported these common interests.

For some authors we've worked with or folks I've met at conferences, the idea of exposing one's profile online is scary. All sorts of questions come up relative to safety and identity theft. But aside

from the predator element that would exist with or without the social network, these sites are pretty safe as long as you use caution when filling out your profile. We'll go into more about creating your profile later but for now, know that social networking can be safe and fun and doesn't have to be a way to expose all the personal details of your life.

As we continue to delve into this Web 2.0 world, you'll start to see more niche social networking sites like those built for wine-lovers, car lovers, and book lovers. The more focused a site can get, the more the network expands. And how many sites should you be on? As many as are appropriate to your message and you have time to manage. If you've got a book about cars then by all means, join the car lovers network. Got a book about travel? There's a travel lovers social network as well (we've listed a few of these niche networks further in this chapter).

Social networks, also referred to as social media, are places where people can join and become members of an online community. These networks provide tools that enable members to configure a customized version of a user page; create profiles and bios; manage invites and contact lists; upload photos, video and music files; and interact with each other via multiple channels. Interaction tools include built-in chat rooms, bulletins, public notes, private messages and comments ("in reply to") on messages.

People join social networks for a variety of reasons: to socialize, share and/or self-promote. The one caveat to this is that social networks are not receptive to marketing messages or sales hype, but those sitting on these sites are looking for answers and advice. In fact your presence on a social networking site should be 80 percent education and 20 percent sales. Users on social networking sites want friends, mentors, experts and guidance. If you can offer this to a social networking site or sites, you can certainly grow your list.

The Right Way to Approach Social Networking Sites

There's an old saying that goes: fake it till you make it. This is not true of social networking. You can't fake anything. The best sites are those with an authentic voice. Social network members can sense an individual who is pretending to be just an "average joe," but is really just looking for a quick sale. In fact the worst thing you can do is constantly promote your book.

Users join social media sites to socialize, not to buy stuff. As we migrate through this chapter it's good to remember that. Be helpful or be gone. That's the motto of the social networks. Remember that social media (much like anything on the Internet) is a trust-based model. You gain trust by helping, advising, educating, or enlightening your readers. Seth Godin who started one of the best social networking sites out there today (Squidoo.com, more on that later) is a great example of what to do when promoting yourself. He offers helpful advice, tips, insight but rarely promotes his book. Does he sell books? You bet he does but he's helpful first, and a sales person second (**sethgodin.typepad.com**). The point is, gain someone's trust and you'll probably gain a sale too.

Social Media by the Numbers:

If you're still not convinced that social networking and social media sites are the place to be, check out these numbers:

2/3 of everyone who goes online visits a social networking site

29 percent of them visit Facebook

35 percent of them visit YouTube

27 percent of them visit Wikipedia

(according to comScore)

Tips for Social Networking Sites

The first piece of this is to figure out what your message will be online. If you're going to expose details of your life, figure out what you want to expose or I should say, what's necessary to expose in order to get your message across. This is important because once you start branding yourself on the Net via social networks, you want to be consistent.

Next remember that the first word in social networks is "social," that being said, these networks only work if you interact with them. I'll profile two of the major networks in this chapter so you can get an idea of what "being social" means.

Whenever appropriate (and this will vary from network to network), join groups, be sociable, be interactive. Participate. You can't just show up at a party and sit in the corner. Well, you can, but you probably won't get asked back. Think of social networks as an online party or network gathering. You'll want to be out and networking as much as you can.

If you can spend a half an hour to an hour or so a day on your networks, that's great. Don't overdo the time you spend on them or you'll burn yourself out. If you can use the social network feeds to have them syndicate your blog to the site, the updating of your social networking page will be done for you. To a greater degree anyway. You'll still want to get in there and tinker, update content, add friends, etc.

Exploring Social Networking Sites

For the purposes of this book I'm going to explore two of the major social networking sites. Yes, there are more including the very well publicized MySpace but that site isn't a favorite of mine partially because so many people have used it so poorly. The site design is terrible and unprofessional and the conversion isn't where it needs to be in my view (meaning getting visitors to engage in your message enough to make them want to click through to your site).

What Is Squidoo?

Created by Seth Godin, Squidoo is a rapidly growing site that lets anyone build pages on their own unique topics. Squidoo offers a free way to create a sort of entry point to your Web site and because Squidoo has a high Google Pagerank it's a quality, high traffic incoming link to your site.

Pages on Squidoo are referred to as "lenses," and each user is called a "lensmaster." Squidoo is a very powerful social network and a fantastic place to market you and your book!

A Step-by-Step Guide to Becoming a Part of the Squidoo Community

Sign up: Creating an account at Squidoo is very easy to do. First, go to the log in page and follow their instructions. You'll then be guided to enter basic information about yourself but be careful with this! Don't enter information that you don't want other Internet users to see. Your "username" is your brand. This is important! You'll want to find a user name that's unique to your message. By "name" I mean find something that rings true for your book and focus. Each Squidoo lens is named. Here are a few we created for clients that you can look at and gather some ideas:

www.squidoo.com/growanybusiness
www.squidoo.com/nichepreneur
www.squidoo.com/theosgoodetrilogy

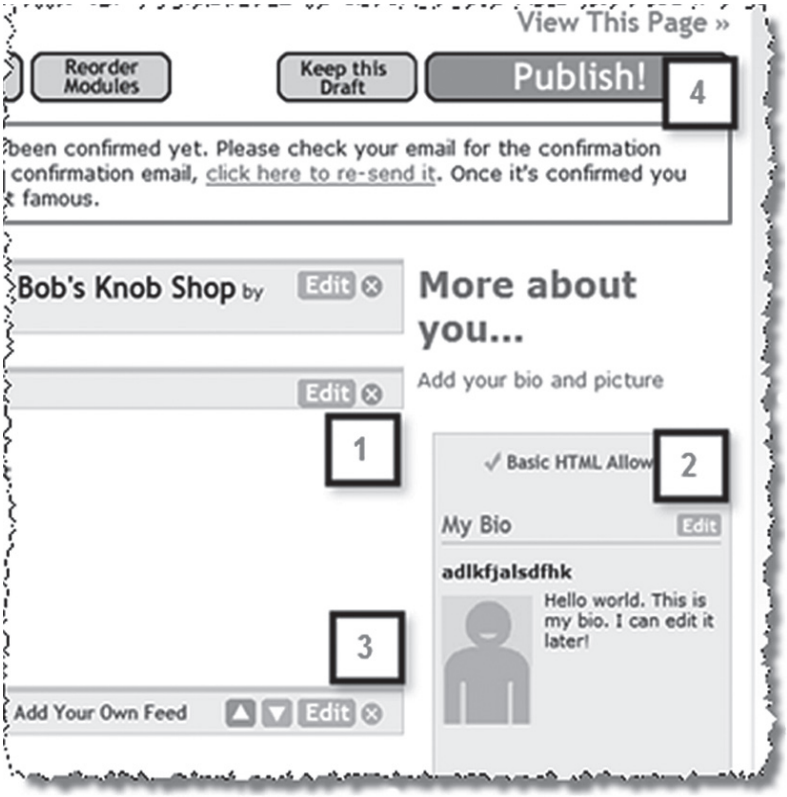
Once you register, you are a "lensmaster." Now let's look at a few step by step instructions for building your lens.

1. Once you've registered and you are a lensmaster, click the button to "Create a Lens." This will start a multiple step process.
2. Enter your lens' subject. What you select is up to you, but don't

forget that it's all about your brand, just like we mentioned above. Lead with your brand!

3. Now Squidoo wants to know what *type* of lens you want. You can customize the lens further once you've completed this process so for now pick the first choice: "I want to get the word out about…"
4. This step is crucial for marketing. First, select a title for your lens. Squidoo enters your subject by default. You might leave that or slightly alter it. What you select will depend on your brand. The lenses referenced above might give you some ideas but remember, once you pick a title you can't change it!
5. Once you've done that you'll get to pick the URL for your lens. Whatever URL you pick, you can't enter spaces. Only use lowercase letters and hyphens. Be sure you like what you pick, since it's not changeable.
6. Once you've done that you'll want to pick a category for your lens.
7. After you've selected that you'll want to rate your lens. Unless you've published Erotica or something else that would warrant a different rating you should pick "G" so you'll get as much exposure as possible.
8. Next are the all-important keywords. These help search engines and users find your lens. Make sure they're good and relevant to your topic! After you enter the security code, you're ready to see the lens. Click "Done!"

Basic Editing on Squidoo



Once you've completed these steps you'll find yourself in the "Lensmaster Workshop." This is the place to tweak your lens, add content, update your photo, etc.

1. Write an introduction. You can click on the "edit" button to tinker with your introduction. This is the text that will appear at the top of the lens. Remember the WIIFM factor (what's in it for me); you'll want to capture your reader's attention as quickly as possible. Why should they visit your lens? Why should they keep reading and all-important: why should they buy your book! You can also use the editing tool to create a

link to your main Web site or blog. Click "Save" when you're done.

2. Write your bio. Click the "edit" button by the default bio, and write a little something about yourself. If you want you can add links here, possibly to your blog, or the "About You" page on your Web site. Don't forget to upload a photo in this section, you'll want to personalize the lens as much as you can.
3. Add your blog. Squidoo lenses thrive on fresh content so if you have a blog (you do have a blog, right?) you'll want to add the RSS feed here so your lens updates each time you update your blog.
4. Publish! Squidoo will not make your changes live until you click the "Publish!" button in the upper right. Don't forget this step, many people overlook the "Publish" button and exit their lens without saving the changes. Once you've done that you can view your lens to see what your visitors will see.

Squidoo Tips

The lenses that do the best on Squidoo are ones that are customized. There are numerous "modules" for you to use on Squidoo, you can customize all of these adding content and enhancements to your site. In fact there are modules that let you link to Flickr and add photos from this site. You can also link to your video on YouTube. Providing fun, unique and interesting content for visitors will greatly increase your chances for exposure.

Our resident Squidoo expert, Susan Gilbert, further recommends the following:

- Every two weeks add or change content in a Write module. This can be something as little as a sentence, or as much as a whole paragraph. You don't need to reinvent your lens. Just make a

small change here and there to keep your content fresh and updated for the Squidoo algorithm and the Google bots.

- Add your lens to a related/relevant group. Adding your lens to a group will create several more links to your lens from within Squidoo.com, and will help your lens get found from more places. In the sidebar of your lens will be a little link list (under the heading Explore More) with links to all of the groups that your lens is a member of. This helps your Google ranking if you are joining relevant groups. Joining relevant groups helps your lens because any visitors to the group (or to a member-lens) can find other lenses on the same topic. Basically, it's like having your shop set up next to a popular shop in a shopping mall. You're going to get found easier.
- Lensroll it on your other lenses. If you don't have additional lenses yet, you can lensroll favorite and relevant lenses by other lensmasters. On your lens, you'll see down the side of the page, the word "Lensroll." If you click it, you'll be taken to a page where you can choose one of your other lenses from the list and pressing to confirm will create a "lensroll" link to your new lens from your old one. The link will be featured in the sidebar either under the heading "More Great Lenses" or "Lensroll." Use this to showcase your related lenses to your visitors. It helps your lensrank too!
- Bookmark your lens on social bookmarking sites. Why social bookmarking? Adding your links to social bookmarking sites should really help your lens get indexed in search engines a lot faster and provide a few extra ways for your audience to find your lens.
- Create a Camtasia video, upload it to YouTube, and feature it on your lens. This will further your reputation with your visitors as an expert in your niche.

- E-mail your list (if you have one) and ask them to visit your lens, rate it, sign the guestbook, and bookmark it in return for some sort of freebie, like a five-page report.
- Start being an important part of the Squidoo community. Visit other lenses with the same topic and sign their guestbook, rate their lens, and ask them to come visit your lens, too. If there is one thing all lensmasters hate, it is Lens Spam. So be genuine.

Expand Your Social Circle!

If you're ready to expand your social networking beyond Facebook, MySpace, and Squidoo, then here are even more social networking sites. Some of them are for authors specifically and others have a more precise focus.

Networking Sites for Authors:

www.jacketflap.com
www.redroom.com
www.authornation.com

More social media sites:

www.migente.com: for the Latino community; 5.4 million users per month

www.snooth.com: social shopping site for wine lovers; 200,000 users per month

www.imeem.com: for iTunes lovers; streaming free music and video; 1.7 million users per month

www.asmallworld.com: an invitation only network for global jetsetters; 160,000 users per month

Facebook

Among the social networking sites, Facebook is probably the best known of all of them. Facebook (originally called thefacebook) was founded by Mark Zuckerberg in February of 2004 at Harvard and was originally designed as a hobby project. Within a few months, the idea spread across the college and shortly thereafter Facebook sign ups extended to Standford and Yale. Since that time it's grown in numbers no one could have anticipated in fact, there has been such a change in traffic and demographic that the average age on Facebook has changed to a median 35 to 64.

Setting Up a Page on Facebook

Unlike Squidoo, which tends to be a tad more involved, the Facebook sign up is pretty easy. There are four basic steps to follow:

1. From the Facebook homepage you'll see a screen that asks you to login or sign up for a free account. Click on "Sign Up," which takes you to a Web form.

2. The form will ask you for your name, e-mail, password, and birthday. You'll also have to go through a security procedure which will involve typing a series of letters and numbers. Once you do that (and agree to their terms and conditions) click the "Sign up now!" button when you have completed the form.
3. A confirmation e-mail will pop into your inbox. Simply click the link when you get the e-mail to confirm that you did register and off you go! You're now logged into Facebook and can start uploading content.
4. You can start building your network by looking for friends, colleagues, and groups that are appropriate to what you're doing. Join any groups that seem to fit your message, and start networking.
5. Facebook works really well when your page is personalized so add some applications that will further enhance this page. You'll want to add photos, a library where you can select books you're reading or ones you recommend. You can upload video, even the RSS feed from your blog. Making the page as robust as you can is your goal!

Facebook facts:

- More than 60 million active users
- An average of 250,000 new registrations per day since January 2007
- Active users double every 6 months
- More than half of Facebook users are outside of college
- The fastest growing demographic is those 25 years old and older
- Sixth-most trafficked site in the United States (comScore)
- More than 65 billion page views per month
- More than 14 million photos uploaded daily.

Facebook Tips

by Susan Gilbert, Search Engine Marketing Expert, JoomlaJump.com

Fill out your profile: Seriously, don't leave pieces of your profile undone. Make sure it's uploaded completely. This doesn't mean giving out your home address or year of birth if you don't want people to know your age, it just means filling out the fun stuff like hobbies, books you enjoy reading and so on.

It's not just about you, it's about the community: Remember the golden rules of social media: help first, promote second.

Step outside of your social circle: try getting away from your inner circle and migrate out to other people who might be good networking opportunities. While it's fun to stay connected to all your college buddies, that's not the main focus of your Facebook page.

Slow and steady wins the social media race: The best Facebook pages (and this is true for any social networking site) are built overtime. Slow growth is best when it comes to social networking sites so don't force a sudden surge of growth. This will also keep you from getting booted off if you add friends too quickly. Facebook watches for people who are adding hundreds of friends at a time and will lock your page if they think you're over-promoting yourself.

Don't be shy: The purpose of Facebook is to connect and interact with other members, so don't be shy! Interact with people on your friend list by commenting on their pictures, wishing them a happy birthday, "poking" them (unique to Facebook), writing on their wall or throwing something at them (again, this is unique to Facebook). Doing all these things will help others to get to know who you actually are instead of just knowing your name.

Content, content, content: Remember that it's important to add content. You can do this by uploading a video, adding the RSS feed from your blog and a variety of other things. You can also add

Facebook applications and there are a bunch to chose from. Spice up your profile using these applications.

Marketing on Facebook: Marketing on this site is done via interaction with members as I've stated before. Interacting with others on the site is a great way to market yourself.

Keep updating your profile: Don't let your profile get stale. Update your status, add photos, answer wall messages and e-mails.

Create events: Yes, you can create events on Facebook and it's pretty easy to do. Once you have your network momentum going and are adding friends, why not plan an event too?

Add your Facebook page to your blog: Make sure and add your Facebook page to your blog. You can have your Web person take care of this for you, it's a simple widget that gets added to let people know you have a Facebook profile.

Keep in mind that there are a few different things you can do on Facebook. There are Facebook Profiles, Pages, and Groups. A Facebook Profile is the standard way to get yourself onto Facebook if you're just starting out, but if aggressive promotion is what you seek then a Page or Group might be better suited to your needs. AME's Internet Expert, Susan Gilbert outlines the two options for you in the paragraphs below.

Facebook Goups and Pages

When people think of Facebook, they usually think of the personal Profile page that is used to connect with friends and family. However, Facebook offers a bevy of viral channels to get the word out to your friends and creatively reach your target audience.

Making sure that you work in accordance with the Facebook TOS—Terms of Service—you'll find that while you want to build the number of friends in your personal profile, you cannot effectively market to them. That's what you need Groups and Pages for. The best part about these Web 2.0 tactics is their cost: free. Let's cover two main areas: Groups and Pages.

Facebook Groups

Groups are the oldest and simplest way to build community around your brand or company on Facebook. By starting a group, you create a central place for customers, partners, and friends to participate in conversations around your brand. Facebook groups come with boards for posting discussion topics, photos, videos, and links right out of the box. You can also easily send news and updates to your group members as often as you like—messages arrive in their Facebook Inbox. And the best part about Groups is you can create as many as you like for free.

Groups are one of the simplest ways to do viral marketing on Facebook. Once members have joined your group, they can easily invite their friends to join the group via a built-in Invite feature.

Groups do have their problems. Facebook removes your ability to blast messages to your group once it surpasses a certain size. While Facebook is working on removing this limit, group owners are still currently experiencing this restriction at 1000-1500 members. Finally, while Groups do offer a reasonably robust feature set with no setup, you're not able to extend their functionality with Facebook applications. In order to use those, you'll need to get a Facebook Page.

Benefits of using Facebook to create a group:

1. It's free.
2. You have access to approximately 70 million members and Facebook is growing exponentially, daily.
3. You can send a message to members of your group with one simple push of the button.
4. Facebook groups grow virally.
5. You can promote your group by several methods for free on Facebook itself.
6. You have the option using paid advertising on Facebook itself to demographically selected niches.

7. Facebook advertising is much, much, much cheaper than Adwords and most other mass marketing systems.
8. Facebook groups allow you to post links, videos, photos and discussion posts.
9. You have the option of allowing your group members to post links, videos, photos and/or discussion posts.

Facebook Pages

Pages were launched by Facebook in November 2007 as a way for businesses of many types to easily establish a brand presence on Facebook. Pages are a lot like groups, with some important differences:

- Pages are more customizable than groups. You can add HTML, Flash, or even Facebook applications to your pages to extend their functionality and the depth of experience users can have with your brand.
- Pages get more prominent "branding" real estate than groups on the profile pages of your fans.
- There is no limitation to the number of fans in your group that you can message.
- "Fans" who join your group are *not* able to invite their friends to be fans of your page. Fans must either "share" your page with their friends, or their friends must observe that they "are a fan" of your page either via their profile page or News Feed.
- Facebook has taken an active role in cracking down on pages not created by authorized agents.

Pages are a good option for small or local businesses that want to establish a presence on Facebook. Like groups, they're another free and easy way to do viral marketing.

If you choose to do paid advertising as mentioned with Groups, Facebook pages are an extremely cost effective method in comparison with the well-known Google ads. Facebook lists these options:

- advanced targeting—target by age, gender, location, interests, and more
- content integration—get noticed, not skipped
- flexible pricing—buy clicks (CPC) or impressions (CPM)
- trusted referrals—attach friend-to-friend interactions about your business to your ads.

So if you want to do some inexpensive advertising to extremely targeted markets you can sign up for a paid advertising campaign for your Facebook page. As always with Facebook, make sure you comply with the Facebook Advertising Terms of Service currently listed at: **www.facebook.com/ad_guidelines.php**.

Microblogging on Twitter

"Life would be so much easier if we only had the source code."—author unknown

There's a hot new trend going on right now and it's called microblogging. So what's a microblog? And moreover, what's Twitter? Twitter is a microblogger platform that allows users to create entries that are only 140 characters in length. These entries are referred to as "tweets." Originally designed to keep friends and family up to date on what you're doing, Twitter can also be a great place to share your latest book project, promotional ideas as well as interacting with fellow tweets (folks who twitter) and writers. And yes, you can have a blog and a Twitter page. I have both but I feed my blog into my Twitter site so that my Twitter page gets updated each time I add new content to my blog. There's an easy application to add your blog feed to Twitter, it takes just minutes to do. Head on over to: Twitterfeed (**twitterfeed.com**). Don't feel bad if the first time you go to Twitter it seems like a mess of conversation, most people feel confused when they first enter Twitterland and many don't see the point. When I made my first entrance into microblogging none of it made sense to me. It seems a bit useless to be honest but then I got the hang of it and saw the real benefit to having and managing a Twitter account. That's really the key. Much like any social media tool we've discussed in this book it's more than just having

an account: you have to manage it too. But give yourself a little time on Twitter before you give up on it, at some point it'll either all make sense or it won't. Either way you're only out a few hours and, perhaps, a few informational tweets.

To sign up for a Twitter account just go to **www.twitter.com** and complete their short sign up form. Remember to brand yourself! This is important. Once you create a Twitter account you can't go back and change your name so find something that works for you. Maybe it's fictionwriter or businesswriter or whatever you want. My Twitter page is @bookgal, (note that all Twitter names are preceded by an @ when referenced on the site you can also find me at **www.twitter.com/bookgal**) this is fun play on words for what I do (and what I love). I don't recommend that you use an underscore (so stay away from Michael_the_writer) since underscores can be tough to remember and if someone is trying to tweet to you from their cell phone or blackberry those underscore keys can be tricky. Once you have a Twitter account you can immediately start tweeting. The service is completely free and you can also keep up with other people's tweets by "following" them. Their microblog entries will show up on your Twitter home page so you can easily keep track of them. You can also be notified by phone when they add a tweet. You can twitter from anywhere, even your phone. I've been known to twitter from my Blackberry.

Why on Earth Would You Want to Twitter?

When Twitter first started, people were a little perplexed and, as I mentioned before, many first time Tweets just don't get it. I mean why on earth would you want to blog in 140 characters? Well since the site emerged in 2006, it's grown enormously in popularity. With Twitter pages from sites like CNN and every one of the political candidates, the site's popularity can't be overstated. Nor can its applications for the future. Also, even if you don't have a ton of people following

your tweets, keep in mind that Twitter search sites are popping up everywhere. This means that if you tweet using keywords that matter to your reader/market, you could be found and followed! For one such search site check out: **summize.com** (there are numerous other ways to search and new ones popping up all the time). Also, if you're trying to gauge the popularity of a certain word or phrase and how often it's being used or referred to, you can head on over to Tweet Volume and find out (**www.tweetvolume.com**). Just plug in your search term or terms and up will pop a list of results!

Flash mobbing

Because of the instant notification system Twitter brings with it, flash mobbing has become more prevalent in our society. But what is "flash mobbing"? Flash mobbing: is the assembling of a group of people via the Internet or other digital means to coordinate their sudden appearance in a public place. Generally they will be directed to do something unusual and then disperse.

The key with Twitter isn't to land on the site and say "What can this site do for me" but rather ask yourself, "What can I do for the folks on this site?" For example, when I started Twittering on other helpful blogs and Web sites and linking to my own articles that I'd syndicated on the Net my followers doubled and tripled on a daily basis. When I plug in my keywords and respond a few times a day to questions people pose on Twitter and offer helpful advice, my followers increase again. One of the other things I did on the site was log onto Socialtoo.com and used the site to autofollow anyone who follows me, this site also sends a welcome message to everyone with a free download of Twitter tips. This helps me capture e-mail addresses who will then become a part of our e-mail newsletter readership.

Best-Known Twitter Users

- Many organizations such as the Los Angeles Fire Department have embraced the technology and put it to use in situations such as the October 2007 California wildfires.
- Higher education is also using the technology to relay important information to students in a more timely manner. The University of Texas at San Antonio College of Engineering is one such example.
- Several U.S. presidential campaigns use Twitter as a publicity mechanism: Ron Paul, John Edwards, Barack Obama, and Hillary Clinton all have Twitter pages.
- Media outlets such as CNN have also started using Twitter to break news.
- Editor-at-Large of Star Magazine, Julia Allison, maintains a Twitter account.
- Want to know who else is using Twitter? Check out **blog.fluentsimplicity.com/twitter-brand-index**

Tips for Using Twitter

If you've pondered using Twitter but aren't sure how to use it effectively, here are some quick tips to give you some great twittering-ideas:

- Teach stuff—teach a little minilesson on Twitter. Delve into your area of expertise or just talk about book publishing and how to get published.
- Share sites or blogs that your followers would be interested in. Be their "filter" to new and exciting information.
- Use Tweetlater.com to post tweets to your account for later posting so you don't have to be sitting on top of Twitter every minute of the day.
- Use Twitter as a news source: you can easily announce news

both from your world (as long as it relates to your topic) and from the world of your expertise. So for example I've done tweets on book industry stuff, breaking news, etc.

- Widen your network—follow other Twitter folk, this will not only give you some ideas for your own "tweets" but it's a great way to network with other writers or professionals.
- Offer advice: use Tweetdeck.com or Twitter Search (**search.twitter.com**) to see who's asking for info on your area of expertise and then offer them some help/insight. This is a great way to build relationships.
- It's okay to market yourself but be careful about pimping your stuff too much.
- Be original, useful and helpful.
- If you're on tour with your book or doing an event, tweet on that and invite your local followers to attend.

- Tweet any good reviews your book gets—it's always fun to share the good stuff!
- Every tweet counts (don't tell people you're washing your cat)—don't just tweet on useless stuff or you'll lose followers.
- It's not all about you (again, back to the cat)—people want to know useful stuff. I know, it's getting repetitive but there's a reason: it's important.
- Promote your Twitter account in your e-mail signature line and on your blog.
- Network: don't expect your followers to grow if you're not following other people. Network, search for others in your area and follow them.
- Personal is okay. Even though I said not to post useless information it's still not a bad idea to (from time to time) post a personal tweet or two. Provide value and Twitter-followers will beat a path to your door.
- Follow everyone who follows you. You can use sites like Socialtoo.com and Tweetlater.com to autofollow everyone who follows you. These services can also send a nice welcome message to your new followers.
- There is a lot of noise on Twitter—the sooner you get comfortable with that the better. It's like being at one massive cocktail party, you have to find ways to filter out the noise. Sites like Tweetlater can help you do that.
- Embed a link or some other sign up in your welcome message—this is another great way to capture e-mails for your newsletter (assuming you have one).
- Use sites like Tweetlater or Twitter Search to see who's talking about you and then follow them too or comment on their tweet.
- It's okay to repeat your tweets. With the volume of messages people get your followers will often miss some of your posts.

- Feed your blog through Twitter using Twitterfeed.com.
- Join Help a Reporter out **@skydiver** for tweets on media leads (it's a great service!).
- Don't feel like you have to respond to every tweet, but I generally try to respond to all tweets that are replies to mine (you can find these under @replies on your Twitter home page).
- Want to stay on top of your market and find stuff to tweet about? Then go to Alltop.com and search for your category. There are thousands of them up there. Here are a few to consider: **socialmedia.alltop.com**, **twitter.alltop.com** and **publishing.alltop.com**.
- Review a product or book on Twitter.
- Follow big names in your market on Twitter: this will often bring in their followers too and you want to see what the "big guys" are up to.
- Get a good picture: don't leave your avatar blank. Personalize your page if you can but a good Twitter picture is a must.
- Tweetbeep.com is a lot like Google alerts. You can plug in your keywords and you're pinged each time they are used.
- Are you ready to add pictures to your Tweets? Then head on over to Twitpic.com, which will let you upload pictures and tweet to them.
- Videos can also be shared on Twitter and 12seconds.tv is a great way to record a video (12 seconds long, hence the name) and share it with your followers.
- Music on Twitter is also possible thanks to TwittyTunes (**www.foxytunes.com/twittytunes**)—this site is great for sharing music and it has a simple Firefox add-in that lets you Twitter on music you're currently listening to.
- Keep Twittering, followers will come if you keep updating your Twitter account.

More on Twitter

Twitter, the little microblogging site that could has seen an enormous growth lately. Traffic to the site has nearly doubled in the last two months, seeing 1.2 million unique visitors per month. If you're not on Twitter you might want to consider it. Twittering or microblogging (as it's commonly referred to) is getting bigger each day as applications for this form of promotion continue to grow. Don't believe me?
www.webpronews.com/topnews/2008/05/16/traffic-to-twitter-nearly-doubles-in-two-months

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Not Sure What to Twitter About?

Check out these creative Twitter sites:
twitter.com/celebritygossip
twitter.com/cookbook
twitter.com/books

Fun Twitter Stuff

If you're still confused about what Twitter is, check out an easy-to-understand YouTube video, Twitter in Plain English (**www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddO9idmax0o**).

Ready for more fun Twitter applications? TwitterMail (**twittermail.com**) supplies you with a personal e-mail address. If you send an e-mail to that address it will be posted to Twitter.

Is Twitter a popularity contest? Yes, without a doubt. Find out how you rank in the grand scheme of Twitter fame with Twitter Quotient (**web.forret.com/tools/twitter-tq.asp**). Find out if you're a Twitter hero or BIG zero.

Addicted to Twitter? You're not the only one. Check out the most popular microblogs on Twitter at **www.twitterholic.com**.

Ready to update Twitter from your phone? Check out Twitter Fone (**www.twitterfone.com**).

Ready to follow some other Twitters but not sure who you should be following? Head on over to Who Should I Follow (**www.whoshouldifollow.com**), plug in your Twitter user name and it'll pop up results appropriate to your tweets.

And if that's not enough, try following **@mrtweet**—when you do this service will send you back a list of people who are top in your category that you should follow. *Tres* cool!

Ready to make some quick cash? Twitter Me This (**www.twittermethis.com**) is a site that will ask a random question; if you're the first one to answer you win $5. Just enough for a latte. Not bad. I haven't won anything yet but I'm still hopeful.

If the Twitter-language has you confused check this out, it's every possible Twitter-term you'd ever want to know (and maybe a few you don't): **www.sitemasher.com/smblog2/2008/10/my-twittonary-every-twitter-term-and.html**.

Twitter-like microblogging

Most people associate microblogging with Twitter; however, there are other services taking over and we will see many more enter the marketplace. In fact, if you have a profile on Facebook, everytime you update your status, your friends see that update which is another form of microblogging. According to Wikipedia there were (as of this writing) 111 Twitter-like microblogging sites.

One of the newer services for microblogging is Jaiku (**jaiku.com**)—a social networking, microblogging and lifestreaming service comparable to Twitter. Jaiku was founded in February 2006 and purchased by Google on October 9, 2007. In their "About Jaiku" section they say, "Jaiku's main goal is to bring people closer together by enabling them to share their activity streams. An activity stream

is a log of everyday things as they happen: your status messages, recommendations, events you're attending, photos you've taken—anything you post directly to Jaiku or add using Web feeds."

Pownce (**pownce.com**) is another free social networking and microblogging site started by Internet entrepreneurs Kevin Rose, Leah Culver, Daniel Burka, and Shawn Allen. Pownce is centered around sharing messages, files, events, and links with already established friends. The site launched on June 27, 2007, and was opened to the public on January 22, 2008.

At Pownce's About page, they describe their service as: "Pownce is a way to send stuff to your friends. What kind of stuff? You can send just about anything: music, photos, messages, links, events, and more."

But the most interesting feature that Pownce brings to the table is you can send a message, or a file, or a song, or an event, to one person; or three of your friends; or only your family; or everyone. That's right, you can engage in private conversations, you can speak to the world, you can have a group of close friends, and a group of associates, and a group of unknown people you just added to your profile, and you can choose when you want to send stuff to any of these groups.

As more microblogging services are created, the feature and benefits will change and increase as another way to communicate and stay connected with your friends, family and business associates.
—by Susan Gilbert, Search Engine Marketing Expert, JoomlaJump.com

Get a Second Life

"I'm not antisocial; I'm just not user friendly."—author unknown

When I first heard about Second Life I remember thinking: "Why would I want a second life? I can barely handle having just one." But apparently a lot of people love having a second life. A second chance to do the things they can't do in the real world. A recent study from Gartner media estimates that by 2011, 80 percent of Internet users worldwide will have an avatar, making animated online personas as common as screen names. Companies like IBM and Adidas have moved into Second Life, which has helped to drive employment opportunities to this site as well. Second Life is set up in such a way that residents can purchase homes, real estate, even clothing using the Second Life currency: Lindens. On an average day Second Lifers spend close to $1.5 million on virtual clothes, jewelry, homes, cars and real estate. The site's roughly 1.2 million active players use their credit cards to purchase Lindens, which are pegged to the dollar at about 270 Lindens to $1. Virtual merchants can convert their profits into dollars through a money exchange run by Linden Lab, the company that operates Second Life. Linden Lab pays out proceeds with real-life checks or through PayPal.

Getting a Second Life

For those who know what they're doing, Second Life can be a lot of fun but as someone who stumbled through their first few days there I can tell you that getting started can be a bit tough. What do you do after you enter this virtual world? How do you find people? How do you network? And the biggest question of all: Why should Second Life matter to your promotion?

Keeping in mind that in Second Life you can be or do anything you want. You can organize events, do virtual book signings, and even lead talks. Just about anything you want is possible in Second Life. You can buy land, meet someone special (no, I'm not kidding, there have been Second Life marriages) or just have fun. I vote for having fun and promoting. The rest is just gravy.

Getting Set Up on Second Life

First, you'll need to download the application. You can download Second Life by going here: **www.secondlife.com**.

Next, you'll want to choose your name but be careful! The name you chose will stay with you for the duration of your life on Second Life. You can't change it so choose wisely!

Your next stop will be to Orientation Island. Orientation Island is where most avatars start their journey. I highly recommend a visit to Orientation Island so you can become accustomed to getting around and communicating in the Virtual World. Once you get to Orientation Island you'll be required to do four things. Completing all four areas will greatly enhance your experience on Second Life. Here they are:

- Move: This section will teach you how to move around in Second Life which can be tricky. I recommend you start here. You'll learn how to walk, climb stairs, drive a car and even fly (yes, you can fly in Second Life).
- Search: With all the things to do and places to visit you won't

want to miss this portion of your new learning. There are groups and communities you can join, shopping centers you can visit and property you can buy.

- Appearance: What do you want to look like in Second Life? Keep in mind that your avatar is a virtual version of you. You can change your avatars hair color, height, even weight. You can also choose whether you want to be male or female. The choice is yours.
- Communicate: Since Second Life is first and foremost a social networking site this might be the most important section on Orientation Island. You need to know how to communicate with others in this virtual world and this portion of your training will teach you how to do that. You'll learn how to have a conversation with other Second Lifers, make new friends, dance or whatever other gesture you desire. This section will be particularly important if you're thinking of doing events on Second Life.

Other Fun Stuff to Do in Second Life

- Events: Yes, there are events on Second Life. Just head on over to **www.secondlife.com/events** to see a list of upcoming programs. Events can be anything from parties to book signings or other virtual events
- Forums: The Second Life forum is where you go for help. There is a forum for just about everything (**www.forums.secondlife.com**). You can also sell stuff on forums so browse this site to see what's there and what others are selling, offering, or ready to help you with.
- Shopping: Yes, you can even shop on Second Life and you can't even imagine all the different things you can buy on Second Life.
- Groups: The groups will probably be the place you want to target the most. You can form a group or join one. The choice is yours. Every kind of imaginable group is on Second Life.

Searching for Stuff on Second Life: When you load your Second Life screen and enter this virtual world, you can type in just about any term into your search box and find it. This is a good trick if you don't have time to sift through a lot of data or just want to find something fast.

Interview with Second Life Expert Aliza Sherman

Aliza Sherman is one of the foremost experts on blogging and Second Life. I decided to interview her to get her insight into the Second Life phenomenon.

What do you think is the allure of Second Life?

I think the logical next step of the Internet and Web is 3-D and thinking about how to communicate, brand, market and sell in a three-dimensional space is exciting. Second Life is immersive, global and all of the things we do on the Web today can be translated into the 3-D virtual space.

Second Life is currently the most advanced 3-D virtual world service available with graphics quality close to high-end gaming environments.

More importantly, the service provides all users with the tools to build and create within Second Life. Because Second Life is not positioned or organized as a game, each user or "resident" can make their Second Life experience and environment into anything they envision. That kind of creative freedom is available to even those with the most rudimentary technical skills.

So in the same way blogging made Web publishing so easy that even your grandmother could do it, Second Life makes virtual world development and interaction very accessible.

Do you think SL is a fad or do you see it growing in popularity?

I think that Second Life represents the best of the current closed 3-D virtual environments out there. I think that the 3-D Web is part of Web

3.0, the wave of the future, however, Second Life may not be the final platform.

Still, developing, marketing and selling in Second Life is critical today in order to gain the knowledge and skills to develop in the future 3-D Web, not to mention that being out there today gives any company or brand a foothold in what will eventually be a much more saturated environment. Early adopters and "late early" adopters will be better positioned at the forefront of a major shift from flat Web to 3-D marketing and selling environments.

Will the future be Second Life? That remains to be seen, however, Second Life will be instrumental in the next stages of the 3-D Web. As mainstream media continues to cover Second Life, membership will grow exponentially.

What's the average age of a SL-fer?

Surprisingly, Second Life skews older than most people think. You are less likely to find 20-somethings inworld and more likely to find people in their 30s, 40s and 50s.

Only 24.5 percent of users are 24 or younger. The majority, 74.4 percent, are 25 or older (January 2008 stats from Linden Lab). The average age is about 33. The most active countries are the U.S., Germany and United Kingdom.

What are the various applications you've seen for SL and what do you predict for it in the future?

There are so many applications for Second Life—the possibilities are truly endless. From a marketing and publicity standpoint, you can find:

- companies extending their brands in the virtual world. Examples:
  - => Overstock.com has a store in Second Life where they give away virtual versions of real world products and link buyers directly to their Web site to purchase actual items.
  - => Playboy Enterprises has a lively island where they sell

branded clothing and accessories for both avatars and people.

=> Splitsville, a bowling parlor in Tampa Florida, offers virtual bowling and has plans to broadcast live music events that take place in Second Life onto real world screens at their new venues in Miami and Dallas.

- companies recruiting in the virtual world. Examples:
  => Manpower has a major 24/7 presence in Second Life where they interview and hire people for real world jobs using virtual world communications.
  => Careerbuilder.com has a presence that leads job seekers to their Web site.
  => Accenture has interative skills-testings games and direct links to their recruiting tools to identify, interview and hire candidates.
- companies offering customer service. Examples:
  => IBM has customer service reps present to answer customer questions covering various time zones.
  => CISCO brings customers into the virtual world to demonstrate system configurations while mapping out their network strategy.
  => Best Buy's Geek Squad has reps inworld to provide technical support.
- cities, states and countries building 3-D replicas where citizens can do business, interact with local governments and tourists can learn more about the locales. Examples:
  => City of Boston where you can pay your real world parking ticket in the virtual world.
  => Mexico where you can enjoy a replica of Chichen Itza and learn more about traveling in Mexico.
- government agencies and nonprofit organizations setting up

a presence to better communicate their messages in a more interactive way with constitutes. Examples:

=> NASA broadcasting shuttle flights and landings on big screens in the virtual world for a worldwide audience.

=> American Cancer Society raising over $120,000 USD in their virtual world version of their Relay for Life.

=> Rasmuson Foundation in Anchorage, Alaska displaying artwork from Alaskan artists on a mountaintop with larger-than-life versions of the art, bringing global exposure to the artists, some of whom don't even have a Web site.

How does SL mirror real life?

Second Life doesn't exactly mirror real life—it is more of an extension of what we do in the real life and online via the Web, e-mail, instant message, online chat, and other modes of communications.

In Second Life, you can be whatever you want to be and do whatever you want to do. You can fly. You can build. You can change your appearance, outfit or hair instantly. You can meet with friends or colleagues. You can attend live events such as workshops, panel discussions, gallery openings, live music concerts. You can organize. You can participate.

Whatever you can do in the real world—known as "First Life"—you can replicate or augment in Second Life. But you can also do things in Second Life that you've only dreamed about in your real life.

From a marketing and PR standpoint, you can create more immersive, interactive and experiential campaigns that are not limited by physics or any other real world limitation.

What's the easiest way for someone to get to know SL?

Is there a step-by-step guide that teaches folks how to buy property, stores, etc?

There are many orientation islands and tutorials for Second Life. When you first sign up for a free membership, you are given the option to join a branded orientation island such as the one created for *CSI:NY* (the television show) or one for Ben & Jerry's ice cream. If you skip that step, you are sent to the main Second Life orientation area where you can walk through a series of interactive tutorials to learn how to move around, fly, purchase items, and interact with objects and other avatars.

There are also some helpful books about Second Life including: *Second Life—The Official Guide* by Michael Rymaszewski et al, *A Beginner's Guide to Second Life version 1.1* by v3image, *How to Do Everything with Second Life® (How to Do Everything)* by Richard Mansfield, and *Second Life For Dummies* by Sarah Robbins and Mark Bell.

One of the best ways to familiarize yourself with Second Life for free is to read Second Life news sites such as SLNN.com and **secondlife.blogs.cnn.com** to identify interesting places on the service. When you log in for the first time, search for these places and go there to explore. Your experience will be much more directed and fruitful if you know where you are going rather than wandering around aimlessly.

Aliza Sherman is a Web 2.0 Evangelist and social media/virtual worlds consultant, and the author of The Everything Blogging Book *(Adams Media) and* Streetwise Ecommerce *(Adams Media). Visit her online at* **www.mediaegg.com**.

Virtual Book Events

"The Internet is full. Go away."—author unknown

The Virtual Author Tour™ is only one of the many types of events you can do on the Net. As space in bookstores keeps narrowing, their event calendars are filling up faster than ever. Sure, you can do events in other spots like spas, coffee shops and retail outlets, but what if the sweat equity of making the events happen stops balancing against the people who attend and/or buy a book? Unless you're doing a speaking engagement as part of a larger event, crowds can be tough to predict. Enter the virtual marketplace. Here an author event can take on a whole different life. Events can be promoted around the world and people can attend and gain exposure to your book and message without ever having to leave their home.

Types of Events

There is no limit to the types or amount of events you can do. The only thing that limits you is your imagination, and possibly your time. From the standpoint of sales, there's no better way to spread the message about your book than through your own passion for the topic. Studies have shown that authors who do speaking events (whether online or off) as part of their promotional efforts sell three times as many

books as authors who don't utter a word at events. But it's not just the speaking that makes sales soar, it's what you say that counts. What you discuss and how to best plan your topics will be covered later in this chapter. For now, know that events are significant to sales, and in the grand scheme of things, they might be some of the best promotion you ever do.

When it comes to the exact types of events you can plan, let your book and your audience be your guide. For example, if you have a book that lends itself to an educational program or series, consider building a variety of teleclasses. If you have a book of fiction and you feel strongly that the audience couldn't possibly be interested in a seminar series or educational session, then try planning "one-nighters" as I'll describe below. Often though, we find that when authors begin planning these types of events they really do find more and more reasons to talk about their book.

Why Teleseminars Are a Good Thing

If I still haven't convinced you that teleseminars are a good thing, then let's look at the individual reasons and benefits to these virtual events:

- You get paid to create new product: every teleseminar I do is recorded. Why? It allows me to create new product on a regular basis, and since the teleseminars usually have a cost associated with them, I'm paid to create new product that I can sell off my Web site or back of the room during in-person speaking events.
- Not only can you create new audio from the teleseminars, but you can create individual product that supports each class, such as workbooks and special reports.
- Your reach is limitless: the fact that we live in a global society isn't new, but how we can use this global village to our benefit is an emerging focus. The answer is simple: get the world involved in your book. By hosting virtual events that don't require travel, you're now inviting the world to participate in your success. Not

only that, but if you think word travels fast in the U.S., then try getting word out about your book and message to a country that isn't already saturated with it.

One-Nighters

My company has done quite a few virtual events, one-nighters, as we've affectionately come to call them. These are standalone events typically one hour in length that involve the author discussing his or her book or reading from it to the listening audience. These events aren't part of a series, although many times we find that they are the spark that lights the speaking-gig fire.

In order to create a one night event you'll need to "tour" yourself on the Net, just like you would in a full-blown virtual tour, only your goal is driving people to one event. Generally when we plan these, we like to ramp up about thirty days prior. This allows us to get our research done, update our lists, craft our pitch and start pushing the seminar enough times so people have heard it repetitively. When it comes to *any* event, repetition is key. Ideally if you're doing an event on, let's say, the existence (or nonexistence) of Bigfoot, then you'll have your event posted on every site related to the topic of Sasquatch. This means that you've identified these sites and contacted them thirty days prior to the seminar or author event to give them enough time to determine if they want to participate.

When you go after sites to help you promote your topic, you'll need to give them something to get something in return. Perhaps you give away a few "seats" to their visitors, or maybe you offer the site owner a few books to give away. If you're not charging for the event, make it clear that this is a free event when you pitch the sites. Regardless of whether or not you're charging I always recommend you have people sign up for this event. Don't let people "wander" into this, make sure they know that space is limited (even if it's not), and add an element of exclusivity. For example, you might want to offer a certain number of

seats per site that features you, and you can make this seem even more exclusive by giving them a code to enter when they register.

If you're doing a paid event, make sure it's educational. Unless you're a superstar, people probably aren't going to want to pay to hear you read from your book unless you're Dan Brown and even then, paid events for readings aren't the norm. If you do want to do a paid event, make the book part of the registration fee. In other words, if you're charging twenty dollars for an event, make sure each participant gets a copy of your book. That way you're tapping into the psychology of "payment," which will increase your attendance and reduce your attrition rate, and they're all getting a signed (personalized) copy of your book as a reminder of what a great night it was.

Educational Teleseminars

If you have a topic that lends itself to teaching then by all means create events with an educational format. There's nothing better for your book then showing the reader (or potential reader) through education how exceptional your topic is. Unlike one night readings with the author, attendees of educational seminars expect to pay *something* to attend. What that is we'll discuss later in this chapter.

Unlike a one night event, educational teleseminars tend to take on a life of their own. Six years ago when I did my first teleseminar I started with one: Get Published Today; now this one seminar has spawned dozens of other programs. The key is to go an inch wide and a mile deep on your content. You might start out with a broad topic base like getting published, and suddenly you're turning that into three other seminars by breaking the program down even further. What starts as a session on getting published now has a special night for crafting a perfect query letter, finding the right agent, pitching directly to publishers, building a platform before you have a book, and so on. Do you see what I mean?

Don't limit yourself to one seminar, experiment with different

topics and see where this educational road takes you. Often, I find that the best ideas for topics come from attendees. After seminars I will always poll people on what they liked, didn't like or what they want to see more of. For example, after teaching teleseminars for two years with iUniverse, a print-on-demand publishing company, one of the attendees piped up during the session and said "We've talked about how to get on TV and radio, how to pitch yourself to bookstores and on the Net, but we haven't discussed building press kits, I'd like to talk about that." After the seminar I polled the group to gauge their interest, and to my surprise over half felt the same way. Needless to say, the press kit class was quickly added to the roster.

When you begin to put together a list of topics, figure out what your reader *really* wants to know, what's pressing on them at this very moment and identify their emotional hot buttons. People will not buy into what you tell them to buy into, they'll buy what they need. Give them what they need, give them an answer to their No. 1 question, and you'll find an audience beating a path to your door. The best way to give advice is to find out what they want, and then advise them on how to do it.

Pricing, Timing, and Other Tricks to Make Your Seminar Successful

Teleseminars or author events don't have to be complicated—the simpler you make them, the more you're likely to do them. When it comes to the logistics of planning an event, all you need is a conference line and these days, they're easier to come by than ever. You can register at Free Conference Call (**www.freeconferencecall.com**) and get access to conference lines whenever you want them. Keep in mind that the dial-in is a toll number so you'll want to notify your participants that long distance charges will apply. You can also get a toll-free number, and I've often done this when I have a paid seminar. You can get a toll-

free line through Free Conference (**www.freeconference.com**). You'll pay a per-minute, per-line fee (meaning that you're only paying for what you use) and rates do vary, so if Free Conference doesn't seem to offer what you want, shop around.

If you want to get really sophisticated with your teleseminars, you can also gain access to online conference centers often used for virtual meetings. These centers allow you to upload presentations so your participants can follow along. Once the class is over, the handouts are downloadable in PDF format, so your attendees have something to take with them after it's over. I've done classes both ways, and I feel that when you're ready and your content is polished, you might want to consider stepping over to the interactive seminars. Having the audio and visual medium seems to hold their attention longer, and now you're addressing two different types of learning methods, which should help your attendees with retention.

When it comes to pricing, it's hard to pinpoint a perfect number. There is no "one size fits all" when it comes to teleseminars, and pricing will vary depending on several components. First, determine the end goal of your teleseminar. If you're using this as a funnel to get people to another level of purchasing, then perhaps a free or minimal cost would be appropriate. If this seminar is designed as a standalone and a possible funnel, (although most seminars work as funnels regardless of how you plan them), then a smaller fee, perhaps around twenty dollars, might be best suited for this particular session.

Having worked both free and cost-based seminars, I can tell you that the response rate is often much better when you charge. Some classes charge just $1 as a psychological way to get people engaged in attending, while other classes charge nominally more, upwards of $300 to $1,000 depending on the class, content and specials offered (we'll address specials later). What you decide to charge will depend on your audience and topic. If you're teaching a class to CEOs, then your fee will probably be substantial. If your session is

for working-class, hobbyists, or stay-at-home parents, then the fees will vary widely.

It's okay to experiment with these rates and also do a quick comparison with other educators or teleseminar leaders in your market. You should be able to find a safe range after only two to three sessions and get a sense of what the expectation is from your attendees. I have also found that seminars can vary in cost depending on content. Our Red Hot Internet Publicity seminars tend to cost a lot more than our Get Published Today classes. Why? Well, content and demand for one. With Internet publicity being as hot as it is right now, the seminars are in big demand and hard to find, so this helps to raise the price point.

In order to sweeten the pot, you might consider offering deals and specials that are only given to those who participate in the call. These could be workbooks, special reports, audio recordings of previous calls, discounts on future programs, consulting or future programs you're promoting. What you offer will depend on your book and business, but remember that sometimes incentivizing the calls can help up the ante when it comes to sign-ups. It also offers additional bottom line value if you're planning future calls and want to expand your platform or sphere of influence.

Incentives are also a great way to get people talking about what you're doing and possibly getting their friends to sign up for future events. In fact, why not offer a buddy sign-up program and give the person spreading the word about your teleclass so much incentive that he or she will run out and immediately tell five friends about your fantastic course?

As any of you who have done teleseminars know, it can be tough sometimes to keep people till the end of the call. Sometimes listeners get the information they came for and click off, and it can be discouraging to hear the "ping" of the conference call exit bell, but here's a quick way to combat that: offer them some exclusive piece of information, possibly the most important piece of your call, at the end of the call.

Alternatively, you can also hold giveaways (should you decide to offer them) until the end of the call.

And finally there's the question of timing. Picking the right time of day can be tricky, especially with three hours between coasts. Keep in mind that the time you pick will have a lot to do with who's attending. For example, if your class or event is targeting the self-employed, you might find there's a bit more flexibility in scheduling than if your target audience works nine to five. For my classes I tend to pick four o'clock p.m. Pacific Standard Time. Why? After experimenting with time zones ranging from Saturday mornings to late evenings I found that four p.m. seems to work well for my target group. Yours may be very different from this. Experiment with times and see what works, or take a look at other seminars in your market and see what time they're offered. This will give you a good idea of what works, and what doesn't.

As we discussed earlier in this chapter, you'll want to record each session you do so you can resell it, and offer it as a bonus to attendees. Luckily, recording a teleseminar is easier than ever. Depending on the conference call service you use, this recording might be included in the package price of renting the phone line. If it's not, you can turn to services like Audio Acrobat (**www.audioacrobat.com**) to record your call. You don't need any special equipment, just a phone line and three-way calling to dial into the recording number. It's really that easy.

Preparing Your Event

Depending on where you want these events to go, you may or may not decide to have a special Web site or Web page within your site dedicated to these programs or one-night events. The idea is to give folks signing up a quick place to land without having to dig through your site. Ideally you'll want to have a sign-up page that's devoid of the usual copy on your site—if you have a dedicated page to the seminar or

one-night author event—that's all it should be about. Don't clutter the page with everything you're trying to sell or promote.

Once you get visitors to your site, you'll want to funnel them into the seminar without giving them too many reasons to click over to some other spot on your site that's captured their interest. Something we've tried quite successfully is creating an "Ask" page for our attendees. Once folks sign up, they're sent a welcome packet with the "Ask Penny" URL, which allows attendees to e-mail questions in advance of the session, or that night. It also offers additional information, points attendees to the incentives (if any) and gives them all the call-in info they'll need for the session. The page is very successful for two reasons: it's simple, and since it's customized to each class it gives the attendees the feeling that we're operating a well-oiled machine. Keep in mind that if this all seems a bit lofty to you, or not appropriate to your market, you can always come back to it.

Once authors get a taste of doing teleseminars, they typically find it a very lucrative funnel, both in terms of new business and book sales. If your event is a one-night author chat, then consider having a single page set up to get participants to buy a special autographed copy of your book. We've done author nights with these one page sites, and they're far more successful than just setting up a call with no landing page. Why? Well, besides being a great place for attendees to sign up (even if your event is free), it's also a way for them to easily order an autographed copy of your book.

Promoting Yourself on the Call

If you've ever sat in on a teleseminar, only to find out it's nothing but a hyped-up sales call, then I'm betting it was the most annoying hour of your life—if you stayed on the call that long. Selling without seeming like you're selling can be tough. Listen, the point of the call isn't to

disguise who you are, what you do, and what you've written; at the same time, pushing your stuff on people is only going to alienate your listeners. I've always felt that the delicate balance between selling and educating can be approached only when trust has been built. When the call first starts, your listeners may have no idea who you are, what you're about or what you have to offer. Some of them have called in based on your rockin' good sales copy.

It's up to you to build that trust and credibility, and in so doing, forge a delicate balance of promotion and education. There are folks out there who do exceptional sales calls, but that's all they are—when you get on the call you know you're going to be sold *something*, but the idea is that you've come to this call to be sold, you're in that mindset. Don't attempt this if you've sold your teleseminar as an educational evening, or you'll do nothing but alienate a whole bunch of readers.

There are subtle and helpful ways during a teleclass or author event that allow you to promote yourself and what you've done. Things like "Well, I talk about this in my book…" and then explaining the point is helpful. Also, you'll naturally talk about who you are and what you're about in your introduction, the thing is the introduction can be funny, most people just gloss over them. They don't know you from Adam, and they want to be convinced that you're someone they should buy from. While the introduction is important, feel free to mention your credentials again at the end of the call.

The End of the Event Is Just the Beginning

Your event is over, now what? The reason you had the event in the first place: getting and staying on your readers' radar screen. The truth is, if you want to capture future sales, it may take a round or two of follow-up to make that happen. Don't waste an opportunity to follow-up with a brief thank you for attending note, additional sales items, or adding your attendees to your newsletter list. Whatever you do, keep 'em in the loop!

Teleseminar tips

Paulette Ensign of TipsBooklets.com has led a number of teleseminars and offers the following additional tips:

- Modify or customize one generic teleclass for different audiences, allowing you to expand your reach and enhance your credibility by niching your work.
- Follow a basic introductory teleclass with more advanced teleclasses, where you can upsell the teleclass service and related products.
- Add a bonus 30-minute phone consultation on to the purchase of a specific product bought within a certain timeframe after the teleclass as a way to allow the person to sample your consulting services.
- Bring guest presenters into the teleclass to broaden the scope of content and make life easier for yourself. You can either interview the guest or guests, or merely introduce them and let them present their content without interruption.
- Emphasize that the teleclass is low-tech, especially if your audience is less savvy with technology. Tell them anyone who has a phone can attend from anywhere in the world, and that no computer is required. That is, unless, you are doing a related slide show or an audio and video interactive class.
- Educate people about the availability of services such as computer-based Skype.com that allow free phone access for attending teleclasses from many places in the world.
- Consider offering a value-added opportunity to hear a free playback of the recorded class, which is available through some teleclass bridge line services. Providing that option can be excellent no-cost publicity for your work and prompt additional sales.

- Allow some limited time for questions from the attendees as a way to know their interests for planning future classes and products.
- Be sure to provide good content throughout the teleclass so people walk away knowing they got value from you. You can pepper your presentation with offhanded references to working with your clients. Save the formal product pitch for the last couple minutes of the class.

A Few Final Ideas to Make Your Event Sing

Have you ever been to a book signing where two authors were there instead of just one? Pairing up to do a book signing is good for a variety of reasons, but the biggest is that you're pulling from each other's mailing lists and, hopefully, doubling the attendance. The same is true when you pair up with someone on the Net, you're both pulling from your lists and, hopefully, drawing a bigger crowd. And you don't have to stop at two for an event, why not pull in several people, and make it an expert night on the Web?

Also, consider this: your events don't always have to be teleseminars, they can also be a chat session or a night of blogging on a particular topic. The point is, the more original you are with this idea, the more unique your event will be and the more likely you are to draw a crowd and the more fun you'll have.

The Best Promotional Tool on Amazon Is Free (well, almost)

If you've ever bought a book on Amazon (and who hasn't) you know that aside from the paid for promotion on the site, much of the sales are driven by reviews. So here's how you can use this system to gain attention for your own book. First, find a high-ranking book in your market. Next, make sure you're a registered reviewer on Amazon. This

means that you have a profile, as long as you have a profile you can review the book. Third, buy the book and read it. No, I'm not kidding. Don't just write a review on a book you haven't read. Once you've read it (and assuming you like it) then pop on over and write a review. When you do keep this in mind: either in your e-mail signature line or somewhere in the review you'll want to reference your book title and always, always write the review not from the reader's perspective but that of an authority on the subject. Often you'll find that readers of a particular topic will buy everything they can find on that topic so if they see your book referenced and your "take" on this title, you could make a sale too!

Virtual Networking

"The Internet: where men are men, women are men, and children are FBI agents."—author unknown

When it comes to the Net, anything is possible, even networking. When we talk about "virtual networking," we're not talking about the kind of networking you're used to, like networking meetings and lunches. We're talking about building credibility, relationships and rapport with other industry professionals. Virtual networking, much like ecommerce, takes time and effort. These days anyone can get an e-mail address and even a Web site, and I'm sure you've also been at the receiving end of a networking request that wasn't all it was cracked up to be. The point being that networking online takes time and effort and much like touring yourself, your site and your book on the Net, you want to be careful who you partner with.

One of the key elements of virtual networking is creating a base or team of people that you either share industry news with or refer back and forth in business situations. While the world is shrinking, old-fashioned referrals are still a good way to get started with this. Knowing someone who knows someone who can get you into your virtual "team" or network is a good way to get started. And on the Net, more than ever, you want to know who you're aligning yourself with. Lasting

networks often start out with a quick e-mail, then a phone meeting and possibly a java break at an industry trade show, but regardless, virtual networking can be key to your success.

Virtual networking can consist of sites like Linkedin.com, which is a networking community or discussion group like those you'd find on Yahoo Groups. When you join these discussion groups it's really important to remember the simple rules of online etiquette, like offering a quick introduction of yourself when you join, and offering guidance to others in your group. Don't just join and ask a series of questions without giving back, these communities are often a close group of people who've been networking for years. Also, observe whatever rules the owner or group "list mom" has posted to the group information page. Often group rules, taboo subjects and posting information will be listed on the home page of the list owner's Web site or the Yahoo group page itself.

If you've joined a group like Linkedin, you'll want to post a profile right away. The idea is to create an "About You" page that reflects your professional and business goals, as well as the work you do. It's also not a bad idea to network with your friends and ask them to join as well. Then, spend a few minutes surfing some of the other members, and invite those that have similar interests or who might enhance your business (and vice verse) in some way to 'connect' with you.

Here is a list of virtual networking sites you may want to consider joining:

www.linkedin.com
www.openbc.com
www.ecademy.com
www.ryze.com

If you're looking for some great discussion groups, here are a few to get you started:

Pub-forum (**www.pub-forum.net**)

Publish-L (**www.publish-l.com**)
Smallpub-civil (**finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/smallpub-civil**)
POD publishers (**finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/pod_publishers**)
Pub-Forum (**www.pub-forum.net**)
Self-Publishing (**finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/self-publishing**)
Fiction_L (**www.webrary.org/rs/flmenu.html**)
Children's Books (**groups.yahoo.com/group/CBpublishing**)
Ind-E-Pubs eBooks (**www.ind-e-pubs.com**)
E-books (**groups.yahoo.com/group/ebook-community**)
Publishing Design (**groups.yahoo.com/group/publishingdesign**)
Book Signings/Mini Seminars (**groups.yahoo.com/group/booksigners**)

E-mail Secrets

Don't get cute with your e-mail address if you're trying to be taken seriously. Something like **jenifferloveschad@aol.com** won't be viewed as a professional e-mail address and probably not a professional pitch. Try getting an e-mail that is linked to your Web site, such as **john@howtoloseweight.com** or **penny@amarketingexpert.com**.

Becoming an Online Syndicated Sensation

"One of the Internet's strengths is its ability to help consumers find the right needle in a digital haystack of data."—Jared Sandberg

At one time or another we've all dreamed of getting our own syndicated column. The likelihood of this happening, we soon realize, is pretty minimal given all the writers jockeying for this same space. Now, enter the Internet where content is King and you don't have to be Dear Abby to get syndicated, you can do it quickly and easily by submitting articles to various article archive sites for syndication.

Submitting Articles and Content

So what exactly *is* online article submission? It's a way to submit your articles to online archives for use in newsletters and on Web sites as content. Now, why on earth would you do this? Think about it: When your article, chapter excerpt, or whatever gets posted, online ezine editors or Webmasters have access to it any time of day or night. If they like it, they submit it to their mailing lists. Then their readers read your stuff, and if they like it, they will head on over to your Web site or, better yet, rush out to buy your book. It's really that simple.

FYI!

Articles should be no more than 500 to 2,000 words in length. Don't forget your byline! You can submit them to just about any resource you want; most places will not require electronic rights.

Online Article Resources

www.freesticky.com
www.ezinearticles.com
www.ideamarketers.com
www.connectionteam.com
www.authorconnection.com
www.marcommwise.com
www.articlecity.com

Red Hot Tip!

Stumped on your article? Here are some starters that might help you create an article around your topic:

Secrets to…
Top Ten Ways to…
Top Ten Examples of…
Top Ten Signs That…
Top Ten Ways to Enhance…
Top Ten Things You Should Know Before…
Top Ten Rules for…

Where Oh Where Are Your Articles?

If you've posted articles on the Net you might want to see how they're doing. Find out where your articles are posted by putting your URL between < > and popping it into the Google search box; here's what it should look like: **<amarketingexpert.com>**.

Top Ten Musts to Create Articles the Web Will Love

1. Make the title of your article a benefit, or tap into your readers' deepest desires, fears or dreams.
2. Do not write an article about you—make it about your reader. If your article has too many "I's" in it, you know you're in trouble.
3. Include your keywords in the title and in the first paragraph of your article.
4. Don't lecture your reader. No one wants to be talked down to. Be humble, show your own faults and get on the same level as your reader.
5. What's your hook? Whatever it is, put it in the first sentence of your article. The hook should be something that taps into where your reader is right now. Ask yourself: What's your reader's greatest challenge, dream, desire, or fear?
6. Tips make great articles. If you've put together several tip sheets you might want to turn them into articles, too.

We've talked about the where and hows of submitting articles online, but the best kind of articles you can write are "lots of them." Why? Because we find that articles sometimes become "delisted" and will suddenly vanish off the Net. No one is pulling them down without your knowledge, it's just the way Google and other search engines police the Net. Yes, you can resubmit them, but chances are by the time you resubmit those articles, they're outdated. The good news is that with all the trend research you'll be doing, creating exciting new pieces shouldn't be too difficult. How many new articles do you need? I write two a month, but if that's too aggressive for you then try to write at least one new article every thirty days.

By creating your own "circle of influence" you'll be able to build a solid online platform that will keep generating and growing. Your work online never stops, but if you plan it right, you won't have to keep

working so hard to keep your name out there month after month and year after year.

Another Red Hot Tip!

Editors, producers, and reporters will often surf the Net to find their experts, so the more you can pop up on Google, the better your chances of getting an unexpected call from the media. So how do you do that? By having a great Web site, offering articles to online venues and newsletters, having a blog, or participating in discussion lists. The idea is to keep your name out there so it keeps popping up on Google when someone searches your area of expertise!

Automating Your Marketing

Microsoft: "You've got questions. We've got dancing paperclips."

Imagine this: you're sitting on a beach somewhere in the Caribbean sipping Mai Tais, while back at home your Web site is selling your books and products for you without you having to do a single thing. Think this can't happen? Well it can, and it's called automation. Automating your Web site and sales tools is the first step to increasing your income. Not just because you're making sales but because it frees you up to do other productive things to promote yourself and your message.

There are a few ways that you can automate your systems. The first is to have the right ecommerce program, as we discussed earlier in this book. The second is to have sufficient product that can be generated via an automated system that doesn't require packing and shipping. Our site, for example, is packed with things that the buyer can get immediately, like special reports that are immediately downloadable, and audio products that can be listened to right away. The third piece to this is responding to inquiries. If your book is part of a larger business, as mine is, then you'll no doubt be getting queries for business, pricing, etc. The way to handle this is via an autoresponder system that will handle the responses (and follow up) for you.

What Are Autoresponders?

Autoresponders are a way to automate the information you send on a regular basis. For example, you can automate a welcome letter when people subscribe to your ezine, or send a thank-you note when someone buys your book, or as I mention above, answer someone's immediate query for pricing or assistance. Ideally, you should try to automate as much of your site as you can, and you can easily accomplish this with auto-responders. Check with your hosting company to see if they offer this. If they don't, there are a variety of auto-responder companies out there. You can try **www.getresponse.com**, which offers a free trial before you sign up.

The Many Uses of Autoresponders

When I first heard of autoresponders, I was leery about having so much automation in our system. I wanted our contact with new authors to be personalized and fresh, then I realized that personal contact is still possible, but getting folks answers quickly is most important. I gave into the autoresponder model and since that time, we've created a number of different autoresponders, all designed to target various aspects or questions about our business. We have autoresponders for everything from basic inquiries to the free stuff on our Web site (like our free screensaver, send a quick e-mail to: **amescreensaver@getresponse.com** to get yours), but the best part of this is the follow-up. Autoresponder systems are designed to run on specific date patterns that you design. For example, if someone wants a free screensaver, they send a quick e-mail to the address listed above. Within seconds, an e-mail pops into their inbox with a link to download his or her freebie. While this isn't a sale per se, the follow-up doesn't end here. Once that e-mail goes out, a series of other e-mails follow, all spread out over about three weeks. None of them are intrusive, just quickie "hope you're enjoying our screensaver" e-mails with a note thanking the person for visiting our site.

The same is true for our service inquiries, although the follow-up e-mails are a bit more focused on the sale. I've used autoresponders for special offers, I've set them up for follow-up to teleclasses. There's really no end to their uses and the best part is, once you get people into your system (i.e. your sales funnel), you can keep directing them to exciting new things you're offering and certainly let them know when your next book or product is being released.

Some Great Uses for Your Autoresponder

- Put your pricing/services/products list in an autoresponder system and then set the system to shoot over an e-mail every week or so reminding the potential customer of your products/services.
- Give away free reports in autoresponder format, and again, get them into your sales funnel by using the autoresponder to check in with them every ten days or so
- If you get a lot of the same questions asked over and over again, consider putting your FAQs into an autoresponder as well

Marketing with Electronic Minicourses

Another great use for autoresponders is the electronic minicourse. If you're looking for a novel and powerful way to get repeated exposure to your audience, you might want to consider launching an electronic minicourse. The key is to build trust and offer useful content your reader can benefit from. As you build trust, you're also going to build a readership and a following. This will lead to increased book sales.

In its most basic form, an electronic minicourse is a free how-to information product that contains three to seven lessons from your book. Nonfiction authors can excerpt portions or chapters from their book; fiction authors can serialize their book and offer readers a taste

of it, without giving away the entire thing. Getting the reader hooked on your book, product or service is what this is all about.

As you go through and create your minicourse, I recommend that you do not create it in Word or WordPerfect, as these programs aren't always compatible with the various e-mail programs. Your readers might end up with an e-mail filled with symbols because their e-mail editor was unable to read what you sent. Instead, create a text-based course by using whatever text editor came with your computer, or by going to Textpad (**www.textpad.com**) and ordering a copy from there. Once you've drafted your lesson plan, you'll want to make sure that your final lesson gives people a reason to buy your book. Whether it's through a bonus or other subscriber offer, make sure there's some sort of call to action.

As far as launching your minicourse, start experimenting with autoresponders so you don't have to worry about sending each course individually. You can set up autoresponders to automatically deliver your course in the exact time and format you decide. I recommend launching one course a week, but if you'd rather not have your reader wait a week to get their next course, you can certainly launch one every other day. You may be able to get autoresponders from your domain host, but if you can't, a number of services on the Internet can assist you with this process. Getresponse.com (**www.getresponse.com**) and Kickstart Cart (**www.kickstartcart.com**) are two I've used and can recommend. Pricing for these varies, and most autoresponder programs have free trials, so you can practice launching your minicourse to see how you like their service and delivery time.

A subscriber list that you've pulled either from your Web site, personal appearances, or both is where you should start targeting your minicourse, by offering your list members a chance to benefit from this free informational tool. You can also ask your Web designer to include a link on your Web site or a pop-up that encourages people to sign up. Once you've started launching your electronic minicourse, get some

feedback from your subscribers and continue to improve or add to it as needed.

Who's Watching You?

Is it a popularity contest? It might be. Check out **www.linkpopularity.com** to see how your site ranks in the grand scheme of things!

Permission Marketing

Permission marketing has gotten a lot of press of late. In fact, a recent article in *Publisher's Weekly* told the story of an author who shot her book up to the No. 1 spot on Amazon.com, where it remained for two days. She accomplished this by sending e-mails to thousands of consumers, offering them special incentives if they bought her book by a certain date. The key here is giving them a deadline like midnight on Monday. Without the deadline, there's no telling when people will buy, and to accomplish this goal Amazon will need a major increase in purchases within a short amount of time. This is what is referred to as "permission marketing."

For this to work effectively, permission marketing usually involves mailing lists you've put together from signings, your newsletter subscribers, or other resources. These are the people that have given you "permission" to contact them about products and services you offer. If you have associates with similar lists, you can also ask to "borrow" their list or ask them to forward a copy of your message to their newsletter subscribers as well. New SPAM laws could make this type of endeavor increasingly difficult, so if you're going to do this, don't overdo it. You will need to keep in mind, however, that two things make this concept succeed: a hard and fast deadline, and any other types of incentives you might offer that will appeal to your customers.

In other words, you may want to offer a series of special reports or audio programs for free if they purchase a copy of your book by the deadline.

So, will this type of marketing guarantee you a No. 1 spot on Amazon? No. In fact, if you're competing against other titles in your genre, you might be in for a fight for the No. 1 spot. There's no way to tell if someone is getting ready to implement this same strategy. There is the payoff of a No. 1 spot on Amazon if you can pull it off. And while this might seem like a lot of work and coordination, if you reach your objective you will always be known as an "Amazon.com Bestselling Author."

Signatures Aren't Just for Book Signings

Don't forget to add a signature to every single e-mail you send out or respond to. Include your name, your book title, and your Web site (don't forget to include the *http://* before the *www* so people can quickly and easily click directly to your site). It's another means to advertise, and best of all, it's free.

Example:

Penny C. Sansevieri
Red Hot Internet Publicity
Visit our Web site at **http://www.redhotinternetpublicity.com**.

Keep in mind that you can also update your signature anytime something new happens with your book or business. For example, let's say you've recently been featured in *The New York Times.* Your e-mail signature can reflect that recent story, maybe even with a link to it if the newspaper keeps its stories online. You can do the same for upcoming events, speaking engagements, and any classes or teleclasses you might be teaching.

The point here is that your signature line is not only a great way to

let people know who they are corresponding with, but it's also a great way to spread your exciting news as well!

Super Creative Ways to Use Your E-mail Signature

If you use e-mail signatures, great! Now it's time to make them work for you. First, consider rotating files for sales, specials, announcements or when you're pitching the media to push a particular book, topic or segment for your business. You can even customize your signature line for the media to include things like your "hotline" numbers and how they can reach you instantly! Also, if you get a lot of e-mails requesting the same information, like services or book information, consider creating a signature line just for that so all you have to do is select that signature when you hit the reply button and then send it off! You could even have a signature "file of the week" with a quote or new saying.

Exceptional E-mail Newsletters

"Warning: the Internet may contain traces of nuts."—author unknown

One rule of thumb in marketing is to stay on the radar screen of your reader. A good way to do this is by starting an e-mail newsletter or ezine. At AME, we've had our newsletter for nearly seven years, and it's been very successful for us. Certainly it's a lot of work, but it's worth it, both to keep us top of mind with our target audience and also to share helpful marketing information with our readers. If you've been a subscriber to our ezine for a while you know that although we use it as a promotional tool, it's 90 percent helpful advice. But what if you're in between book releases, and you've got nothing current to sell? This time, probably more than any other, is when it's important for you to keep your message out there. When you're promoting a new release, it's a no-brainer that the word of your book will be getting out there, but when you're knee-deep in writing the new one it's more crucial than ever for you not to lose the momentum you gathered through your last campaign.

Many of you probably already get these from a variety of sources. These days, ezines have almost replaced magazines, with topics ranging from how to publish your book, to building an effective Web site, or decorating your home. There are ezines for just about every

topic. So, if the pond is so full, why would you start one? Well, in today's busy business climate, people are inundated with messages and advertisements all the time. On average, we're exposed to over 100,000 ads each day. With ads becoming diluted, an e-mail newsletter is a good alternative to this noise. An e-mail newsletter, sent once or twice a month with information, tips, and helpful advice, keeps you on your readers' radar screen and keeps your message in front of them, week after week, month after month.

Timing Is Everything

So, if you're ready to launch your newsletter, timing and getting people to open it could be harder than writing the thing. The key, according to some experts, lies in when you send it. An eROI study on the best days for getting folks to open e-mail ads and ezines is either Tuesday or Sunday. The worst day? Monday. Keep in mind that your specific audience might factor into this as well. If your readers are in corporate America and your e-mails generally go to work addresses, sending an ezine on Sunday might be the same as sending it on a Monday, if they don't see the e-mail until they arrive at work.

If you decide to start an e-mail newsletter, what on earth would you write about? For nonfiction books, the topic should be fairly simple. Write about your area of expertise. You can pull chapters from your book to use as articles in the newsletter and offer current, relevant hints to your readers. A newsletter doesn't have to be long—given the amount of reading most of us already do online, I suggest keeping it short and simple. Five to seven pages should be your target; you can even go less if you want. It's entirely up to you, you're the boss and you decide what works and what doesn't for your readership.

Why Ezines Matter

Here's a stunning statistic: E-mail marketing via opt-in ezines is 83.2 percent more effective than Adwords, online ads, print advertising, and direct market mailings. Any questions?

If your book is fiction, then you might excerpt chapters in your newsletter from your upcoming not-yet-released blockbuster novel, provide an updated listing of where your readers can find you doing a signing or a talk or even offer some writing tips for those readers who aspire to finish their own novel someday. You can also use your newsletter to involve your readers with contests and surveys, or ask them to share their own writing, publishing, or marketing stories.

There are a number of ways you can get subscribers. If you're doing an event, talk, or book signing, bring a sign-up sheet with you so people can subscribe to your ezine. Friends and family are always great supporters and might even pass an issue or two along to someone they know who might be interested in your product, topic, or service. And finally, if you have a Web site, make sure you have a place for people to sign up if they want to subscribe to your ezine.

If your e-mail list is small, you can send your ezine by hand through your own e-mail program, but as your list expands consider getting a service like Constant Contact (**www.constantcontact.com**), Graphic Mail (**www.graphicmail.com**), or Kickstart Cart (**www.kickstartcart.com**). For a nominal monthly fee, these services will help you manage your ever-increasing list of newsletter subscribers and send your newsletter on the date and time you specify.

Once you've established your newsletter and run through a few issues, you might want to think about expanding your audience reach by posting your newsletter at various ezine directory sites. You can submit your ezine to the directories listed below. Read the submission instructions at each site first before you start the submission process.

Directories:

E-ZineZ (**www.e-zinez.com**): A searchable ezine directory
EzineSeek (**www.ezineseek.com**): Categorized and searchable directory of ezines
eZINESearch (**www.ezinesearch.com**)
Tile Net (**tile.net/lists**): A project of Lyris Technologies, Inc.
Get Published (**www.published.com/add**)
New List (**www.new-list.com/instructions**): A series of mailing lists that provides more than 6,000 subscribers updates on new ezines. You can even add your own newsletter to the list.

E-mail Newsletter or Blog?

In an age of overly aggressive SPAM filters, we find that often our newsletter gets caught in these filters and never makes it to its destination. That's why we've started adding our newsletter to our blog. Why? Well, we have our subscribe feeds up on the site so folks can always gain access to our information and to our newsletter! If their SPAM filter zaps it before it lands in their e-mail box, they'll still be able to find it on our blog!

E-mail newsletters are a great way to keep your message active and stay in contact with your audience, customers, or future readers. Done correctly, word about an ezine will spread like wildfire. Offer an incentive to your readers if they pass one of your newsletters on to a friend, or offer them the opportunity to run an ad in your newsletter announcing the release of their book. Enroll and engage your readers in your message, and get them actively involved in your newsletter by allowing them to contribute articles or other forms of content. Build a loyal reader base and you'll find not only valued customers, but messengers willing to spread the word about you and your book!

BONUS: If you're looking for an easy to use ezine template

to get you started, send us an e-mail at **e-mailnewsletter@getresponse.com** and we'll get one right out to you!

Speaking of great newsletters, may I shamelessly recommend mine?

You can get your free copy of The Book Marketing Expert Newsletter in your e-mail box every two weeks by sending an e-mail to **subscribe@amarketingexpert.com**.

E-mail Announcements

A recent *Wall Street Journal* article discussed how e-mail ads are becoming more entertaining and informative to help draw consumers in. While we think that spam is the killer of the e-mail ad, the opposite is in fact true. Many retailers are pouring huge efforts into e-mail ad campaigns, but not just your average "ad"; instead, retailers are getting creative, fun, and informative. You can use this information to your benefit. Send around a colorful e-mail ad that offers some holiday tips, perhaps shopping, destressors or quick and simple party recipes, then tell your readers what your book can do for them, and why it's the perfect holiday gift. Oh, and one more thing, keep them from being too over-the-top sales like or hard sell and most of all, keep these e-mails short. People have much less time during the holidays!

Newsletter Facts

If you're mulling starting a newsletter, consider this: most international readers don't want HTML because they have to be online to read it, and most other countries don't have cheap and fast Internet access like the U.S. does. Also, whether U.S. or abroad, as much as 40 percent of HTML doesn't get to its intended recipients because of spam filters.

Simple Ways to Grow your E-mail List

1. Don't hide your sign up form. Many times Web sites will have sign ups at the bottom of the home page which users generally won't find. If your sign up isn't clear and one of the first things surfers see when they land on your page it needs to be.
2. Be careful what you ask for. Asking for too much personal data can be crippling to a sign up list. Generally I'll recommend that people ask for an e-mail and first and last name (in case your e-mail program can customize each newsletter with the subscribers first name). Otherwise leave the extensive data gathering for another time. The quickest way to lose subscribers is to ask them for information they're not comfortable giving.
3. Overpromise and overdeliver. If you're going to do this, do it right. Don't gather e-mail addresses only to offer something of minimal value in the way of a newsletter. Make sure your readers know exactly what they'll be getting in fact, why not offer to let them scan some back issues so they know right up front what to expect. If you overpromise and underdeliver, you'll not only lose subscribers but valuable readers as well.
4. Say please, say thank you. You've already said "please" with your ethical bribe, now make sure you say thank you for signing up with a robust sign up page. Depending on what your goals are for this newsletter your sign up page can reflect this. Perhaps your book cover or some other information? While you don't want to overwhelm folks, a blank sign up page is a little lackluster in its delivery and should be avoided at all costs. If you just want to say "thank you" that's fine too but make sure they have a way to get back to your home page.

Cashing In on E-books

"Computers are like air conditioners: they stop working when you open windows."—author unknown

Some years back, several publishers were touting the benefits of e-books, saying that they would soon replace paper. Microsoft came out with an e-book reader, it was clunky, pricey, and you needed an advanced degree in physics to be able to use it. Now, after considerable wind has been let out of the e-book market, they seem to be on the rise again. In fact, if you look carefully you'll see that e-books are everywhere. E-book sales grew by approximately 30 percent in 2007 and with the release of the Amazon Kindle E-book reader, the sales of these digital titles are sure to soar.

E-books, by definition, have always meant the electronic version of a book but marketers have tossed out this terminology to refer to special reports and miniversions of your book or, for that matter, entire niche topics addressed only in e-book format. For the purposes of this chapter, I'm not going to address the entire digital version of your current book but rather spin-offs of your title. For example, when you go to our site at **amarketingexpert.com** you'll find a series of special reports (e-books) of excerpted chapters from Book to Bestseller and even the book you're reading. This is just one example of the types

of things you can do with e-books. So, if you're ready to tap into this potentially lucrative market, read on and get ready for some electronic success of your own.

The Top Three Things Any E-book Creator Should Know

1. It's not how long the book is, it's how important the information is to the reader.
2. Use easy download files like PDF's, which most people are familiar with. Using fancy-looking devices can cause a customer service nightmare.
3. Do your keyword research first before you take the time to write the book, ensuring that you have an audience who wants your subject matter.

—*Susan Gilbert, Search Engine Marketing Expert, JoomlaJump.com*

To get a copy of the e-book *Article Cash,* head on over to www.susan-recommends.com/articlecash.htm.

When E-books Make Sense

Before you run headlong into e-books, there are a few things you need to know, beginning with size. Ideally, your e-book shouldn't be too long. I usually recommend under 100 pages, but I've seen longer, and for some topics, it seems to work. If you can keep your e-book shorter, however, that's great. Keep in mind that the individual downloading it will most likely print it, too, so the shorter it is, the better. Next, the best e-books are those with the "I need it NOW" element. Whether you're offering tips to cure a migraine or soothe a wailing baby, the urgency can't be underestimated. If you don't have a book that has a sense of urgency to it, you might find that breaking it into chunks makes it more appealing and "ups the urgency" level considerably.

Let me give you an example: my book, From Book to Bestseller,

doesn't have a sense of immediacy or urgency to it per se, but when I break this book into bits and pieces, the individual pieces drive more urgency than the book as a whole. So, if you've been doing a lot of radio pitching but can't seem to get a single interview scheduled, then you happen onto my site and see my e-book (also called a special report) called "How to Get on Radio and TV…Today!" suddenly you realize this e-book has the answers you need. It's solving an immediate problem. Take a look at your book and decide if it works well as a standalone e-book or whether it needs to be excerpted or both. I offer all of my books in e-book and in special mini e-book fashion.

If you have an e-book version of your print book, great! But if you don't, you can easily create an e-book from your Word document. Just be sure to not overload it with graphics, pictures or colors that might extend download times and increase the size of your e-book.

When it comes to the type of e-book or format you'll be offering, there are many available. The most desirable is PDF, or Portable Document Format. PDF can be read by virtually any computer provided that your reader has an Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on his or her computer (most people already have it). Adobe Reader is a free program, so if your readers don't have it they can download it by going to **www.adobe.com**. The next thing you'll need is conversion software. This is software that will convert your Word document into a PDF file. You can get this for free at Adobe by going to **createpdf.adobe.com** or by going to **www.pdf995.com**.

Depending on the audience you are serving, there may be a need for active hyperlinks, meaning hyperlinks that are clickable, creating an interactive e-book experience for your reader. You won't be able to create this with the free PDF converter offered at Adobe, but you will be able to create active links through PDF995 as mentioned above. The program costs approximately $9.95.

There are a lot of places to list your e-book for sale, including Amazon.com, but you'll need to have an ISBN number for your e-book.

If you have an ISBN for your print book, you'll need to get another one for the e-book version if you do intend to sell it at Amazon.com. You can also sell your e-book at **www.ebookmall-publishing.com**, and don't forget to offer it on your Web site as well! Regardless of where you sell it, e-books are a great idea. And if you're ready for some electronic success, this might be the best route to go.

Exploding Your E-book Niche

The further you get into the e-book market, the more you'll find that the best e-books are totally niche-focused. That's one of the reasons general fiction isn't a hot seller in the e-book market, it's just not nichy enough. E-books allow you to get into areas you might not be able to access with the print version of your book, and also, because it's so easy to create e-books, you can create as many of them as you want. The idea of the e-book really allows you to dig into areas and focus one book or concept in a million different directions.

For instance, you have a book on getting organized. You could take the concept of this e-book and refocus it for particular industries like: getting organized for nurses, doctors, veterinarians, or even getting organized for singles (of course you'd want to throw in some dating tips for those now well-organized singletons, too!). The more you can customize your e-book, the better off you'll be and the more interest you can attract for your topic. Keep in mind that this customization doesn't have to consist of extensive rewrites. In most cases, some tweaking to the copy, and a few chapter additions are all it takes to complete this task. But, the closer you can get to customizing your material, the better. Recent studies have indicated that books are no longer considered static and the advent of print-on-demand has certainly been a catalyst. Now e-books and the technology that supports them can give us abilities to customize beyond our wildest dreams.

There are some additional ways to make money from e-books—and not just from the sale of them. If you have ever been part of an

affiliate program you know that these can be quite lucrative. If it's appropriate to your topic you might consider building affiliate content into your e-book. These could be from affiliate programs for software, marketing tools, or books (Amazon's affiliate program is one of the easiest to join). If you utilize affiliate links in your e-book, you'll want to be sure that readers can click through to the products from within your e-book. Make sure the links are "live," otherwise you might be losing significant numbers in sales.

Red Hot Bonus Material: More Red Hot Jewels for Your Journey

"People say Microsoft paid $14 million for using the Rolling Stones song 'Start Me Up' in their commercials. This is wrong. Microsoft paid $14 million only for a part of the song. For instance, they didn't use the line 'You'll make a grown man cry.'"—author unknown

As I put this book together I found that there was an overflow of information that just needed a place to go and didn't seem to fit within the book itself. I created this bonus section as a booster when you need it or are just in the mood for some quick hits of information. You'll notice that it's divided up into a few sections and several folks have contributed to this portion of the book.

I hope you've enjoyed what you've read so far; your journey is only beginning. I hope these additional jewels can help.

Simple Ways to Market Yourself for Red Hot Success

"Entire new continents can emerge from the ocean in the time it takes for a Web page to show up on your screen. Contrary to what you may have heard, the Internet does not operate at the speed of light; it operates at the speed of the DMV."—Dave Barry

Now that we're nearing the end of this Internet marketing and publicity journey, I thought I would break this down for you even further. So often we read books like this, put them down and never pick them up again. This is a shame because there's so much that you can be doing right now to market yourself. Don't let Internet intimidation keep you from success. Here are a few simple, bottom line ideas you can implement to get you started!

Blogging

If you don't feel like you can do anything online or you don't have the time for extensive promotion, the quickest and simplest thing you can do is have a blog. A blog is a great way to keep your site fresh (search engines love sites that are updated often) and a blog is great way to reach your reader. If you don't have a blog or haven't blogged in a while, take heart: start somewhere and plan to blog a minimum of twice weekly. You'll need at least two posts a week to keep it current. The biggest problem though with new bloggers is deciding what to blog about. Well, here are some ideas:

- Talk about trends in the industry you're in (this works even if you write fiction, talk about the publishing industry…)

- Review other (similar) books—this is a great way to network with other people in your market
- Blog "in character"—readers love this!
- Develop your next story on your blog: you can ask for reader feedback on story direction, characters, etc.
- Lend your voice to a "hot" industry issue or controversy
- Comment on other blogs or feature them on your blog
- Interview people on your blog
- Talk about the elephant in the room: if there's a looming issue in your market, why not offer your insight on your blog?

Feedback and Blog Comments

If you aren't getting people commenting on your blog, don't despair, it takes a while to get folks commenting and offering feedback, but the more you can tap into issues your reader cares about, the more comments you'll see popping up on your blog.

Publishing Content

The Internet has really opened the door to publishing and pushing a lot of content online. Whether it's articles, audio, or video, there's a home for all of it on the Net. Consider doing article syndication as a good place to start pushing content online. Here are some basic guidelines for article syndication:

- You don't get paid for this syndication. This is always the first question I get when I talk to authors about syndicating their articles, book excerpts, or tip sheets. You post it online for others to use and promote you, what could be better?
- Your articles need to be helpful, not self-promotional. The more helpful they are, the more likely they are to be used. Yes you can mention your book but my recommendation is to keep any and all promotion of it to your byline.
- Article titles are important. Remember that the title of your article must be description, don't make people guess what you've

written about. If you do, you'll find your pieces aren't as popular as you'd like them to be.

- Articles should be a minimum of 500 words, max of 2,000. Generally the most popular pieces are around 1,000 words. Don't forget your byline and Web site address. Also, and very important, get those articles edited before they go out on the Net. Once you send them out, you can never get them back.

Participate

When it comes to online promotion, it's really about participating. Think of the Internet as one big cocktail party. Go strike up a conversation with someone who you'd like to get to know better. Here's a great way to do that. First, go to Technorati.com and find the top five blogs in your market, then watch them for a week or so and when you're comfortable with what they're talking about and the angle of their message, start posting comments and offering your own insight into their postings. Bloggers love comments and by participating you're doing two things: you're doing some virtual networking (aka cyber-schmoozing) and you're promoting yourself via the link back to your site that's part of your post every time you comment.

Conduct Your Own Blog Tour

After you've done some virtual networking and gotten to know some folks in your industry. You'll want to contact them to see about guest blogging opportunities. Guest blogging is pretty simple, you post an article on a site (sometimes it's also a Q&A) and you respond to comments that come in during that day or week that you're guest blogging. Be ready to host a blog tour of your own and unless the content is really off-topic from your site, I recommend that you consider it.

Blog Carnivals

If you haven't participated in a blog carnival and you've been blogging for a while then head on over to **blogcarnival.com** and get started. Honestly, it's supereasy. Just find a category/topic that you can speak

to or have blogged on and submit those blogs for consideration. It's a great way to virtually network and publish more content online.

Help Promote the Good Stuff

Do you get Google alerts (**www.google.com/alerts**) on yourself? If you don't, you should and here's why: how else will you know what people are saying about you online? Google alerts is a simple way to monitor the cyber-chatter and get in touch with folks who review your book or feature you on their site. You can also go to Technorati.com, plug in your name, company name or title of your book and see what you pull up, then you can subscribe to the syndication feed of the search (just hit the RSS button and it'll automatically subscribe you to that feed). Once you have your feeds all ready to go you'll want to promote all the good stuff. How can you do that.? Well first off offer a cyber-thank you to whoever mentioned you, reviewed your book or featured you on their site. Next, link to their site from your blog and finally, go to a few social bookmarking sites and bookmark these postings for enhanced exposure. Here's how you do that: go to either Digg.com, Stumbleupon.com, or Delicious.com and create accounts (this takes just a few minutes). Then follow the instructions to bookmark a blog post or page on the site that's featured you. This will help drive interest (and possibly traffic) to the site (which site owners will love you for) because you're placing it in a public bookmarking system.

There's a lot more you can do online, the possibilities are really endless but what I've found is that the confused mind doesn't take action, so the simpler you keep it, the more you'll do. If only one thing on this list appeals to you that's great. Keep in mind, doing one more thing this week than you did last week keeps you moving forward and helps you continue to create marketing momentum for your book!

Press Releases Are Useless: Internet Press Releases and Beyond

"Back up my hard drive? How do I put it in reverse?"—author unknown

The Internet has changed everything, including the way we deliver press releases. A recent Cision (formerly Bacon's) (**www.cision.com**) article stated that releases only have a 36-hour shelf life—meaning that if you're going to get your news out there, you'd better do it fast.

Did you know that 98 percent of journalists go online daily? (Source: white paper released by Expansion Plus Inc. **www.expansionplus.com**). Here's the breakdown of what they're doing while they're on the Net:

- 92 percent article research
- 81 percent searching online for stories and information related to piece they're currently working on
- 76 percent to find new sources and/or experts
- 73 percent to find press releases

If you're crafting a press release to fax or e-mail to the media—stop! This is a colossal waste of your time. Why? Because the old way of doing press releases no longer works. Press releases, the old way, are useless. And here's another tidbit: by posting your release online you can circumvent: gatekeepers, spam filters, or your press

release disappearing in the glut of e-mails a reporter or producer gets each day.

A recent study indicated that over 70 percent of Americans get their news content online so not only are reporters online, but consumers are, too. This has made online press releases very attractive to media professionals and authors. A few years ago you could almost guarantee a media person would call you if you posted your release in an online newsroom like Prweb.com. It was simple and free and a posting generally took you no longer than five to ten minutes. It was time well spent. But as the flood of press releases hit these online venues, the ratio of posting versus media attention changed, and the deluge of releases only served to clutter these portals until finally a paid service was offered.

Many thought this was the salvation of the online press release posting and for a while, it was. Now, however, this has changed yet again. The low cost of posting to these sites makes it fairly reasonable for anyone to get a listing and consequently, the clutter continues. But much like the clutter of sites on the Net, the solution to this is very simple: press release optimization. What is "optimization"? Let me explain.

When your press release resides online, whether it's through a service like Prweb or you've just put the release in the media room on your site, you need to treat this release just like you treat a Web site and optimize it using keywords and techniques that are "Web friendly." AME decided it was time to create a system that would optimize a press release. Resident SEO (search engine optimization) guru Susan Gilbert cites an example that she used to gain a mention in a major news source: "Here's an example from a new Web site I created: The domain name was registered on February 3 and the site was completed on February 10. I created a press release (which had an official date of February 15, 2007) and submitted it to several online press release agencies. My site was indexed in Google within a week, and was considered the 'authority' on the topic in Google by March 15. On

April 2 I was contacted by a journalist who found my press release online. She was researching my topic for inclusion in *Home Style* magazine. *Home Style* is published both offline and online by Content That Works (**contentthatworks.com**). Content That Works has licensing agreements with more than 200 newspapers in the United States and Canada. Combined, these newspapers reach more than 12 million households. My Web site and interview will be featured in May's issue."

The trick here are the keywords, which are often misunderstood: "The biggest mistake a novice can make," offers Gilbert, "is thinking that your keyword is the root word of your subject matter. The competition for all root words (i.e. romance novel, scrapbooking, etc.) will never achieve ranking. Keyword research is an art that takes a long time to learn and takes keyword research tools that can be costly. Additionally, keyword research changes based on the newest algorithms and search engine advances." Much like a Web site designer, or someone who writes your press release, don't trust your keyword searches to just anyone. Make sure they are tuned into the Net and aren't just offering standard or "root" keywords.

Once you have your keywords defined, you'll want to use these in the headline and the first 50 words of your release. The next piece of this is the length of your press release. Generally, online releases should be no more than 600 words in length and have at least one (preferably two) hyperlinks back to your Web site. The keywords can also be used as anchor text for these links, too. Again, a good keyword person should come back with two or three relevant search terms that your target audience is likely to use for a news search.

By optimizing your release you'll not only get onto the radar screen of your desired consumer targets, but you'll also get some valuable incoming links, and search engines love those! Anytime your story gets picked up by Web sites (and in particular news Web sites), it creates an inbound link which helps with your site ranking.

When it comes to writing a release for the Web, toss out everything you learned about press releases and start thinking broader. If your only reason for writing a release is to garner the attention of the media, think again. Your new target should be your reader, and truth be told, your reader should have been the target of your releases all along. Whether online or off, if you don't target your reader, you're focused on the wrong person: the media. Chances are if you've created a release with your reader in mind, the media will find its way to your door, too.

Great Places to Post Your Press Release for Free

www.click2newsites.com/press.asp
www.ebookbroadcast.com
www.pressbox.co.uk
www.prweb.com
www.free-press-release.com/submit/free-press-release.php
www.i-newswire.com/submit_free.php
www.clickpress.com/releases/index.shtml
www.prleap.com
www.pressmethod.com
www.free-press-release.com
www.prfree.com
www.24-7pressrelease.com

In the past five years or more, we've posted every release we've done onto the Net. There are a lot of places to upload your release for free, whether or not the media checks them is anyone's guess. Several of these services became so overloaded that the media has begun to migrate elsewhere. The point isn't always to go where the media is, the

point here is to get it posted and start the bread crumbs trail back to your book, your Web site, and you.

In the Old Age of PR:

- The only people who saw the releases were media folk.
- You had to have a significant event before you launched a press release.

The new rules of PR:

- Don't wait till big events happen, send releases frequently, and find good reasons to do so.
- Instead of doing a media-focused release, create one with your customer in mind.
- Make sure your release is packed with keywords—the Net will circulate this release twice as fast.
- Add links to your releases so consumers (or the media) can find the specific item or items you're talking about.
- Use the press release as a funnel to drive them to the sales page on your Web site.
- Got freebies or free trials to offer? Mention them in your release and be sure to link to them.

And finally, if you're still not sure this is the route for you to take, consider this: Yahoo! News outranks CNN and the BBC, meaning that Yahoo has more news readers than either of these two giants. So if you're planning a campaign, or still knee deep in an ongoing one, consider optimizing your press release, it might give you the boost you need, and who knows, maybe even get you noticed by that elusive media target.

Another Great Quote!

"A link is, in essence, a vote of confidence that a fan leaves inscribed in cyberspace: Check this site out! It's cool! What's more, Internet studies have found that inbound links are an 80 percent accurate predictor of traffic. The more links that point to you, the more readers you'll have."—*New York Magazine*, "Blogs to Riches" (February 2006)

Five Things You Must Know About Web Marketing

"To err is human… to really foul up requires the root password."—author unknown

1) Don't Listen to Your Mother

Mom was always a fan of telling me that little girls should be seen and not heard. In a world of Web-centric marketing this will kill a campaign. So little boys and girls, stand up and be heard. Be vocal. Use your podcast, blog, and by all means hop on over to social networking sites and be heard there too!

2) Don't Languish in Obscurity

If your site isn't getting noticed by people who can make a difference (i.e. buy your book and/or product), what's the point? Driving traffic to a Web site that isn't converting is like sending buyers to a fabulous store and locking all the inventory in the basement. If you aren't sure if your site is converting have your Web host give you access to your Urchin or C-Panel information. This may take a bit of deciphering at first but once you learn how to reach these reports you'll unlock some very important information. Namely how many people are visiting your site, how long they're staying and (gasp) which of your pages within your site is propelling them to the competition.

3) Emphasize Your Personality

The Internet has forced all of us online-gurus to become more personal.

By this I mean offering insight into all things related to our topic (both good and bad). Gone is the formal corporate jargon, in its place is a blog that lifts the curtain, a podcast that shares some additional insight and a Web site that screams personality. If your Web site is blah, your sales will reflect this. Get spunky if it's appropriate to your topic but by all means, get personal. Don't have a blog yet? I want you to stop reading this immediately and go to **www.wordpress.org** and start one.

4) Be Helpful or Be Gone

Have you ever noticed that the sites you keep coming back to are the ones that offer help, insight, encouragement, or important advice you simply can't be without? Well, your site should do the same. Be helpful till it hurts. Why? Because anyone can get one visitor to their site, getting them to come back is an entirely different thing altogether. Give them a reason to return by offering them something they want. For some markets it might even be giving them humor. If humor is what they want then by all means that's what you should do.

5) Content Rules

In the world of Web 2.0 and all things Internet, content is really king. By "content" I mean don't have a site that's flat or doesn't give potential buyers a reason to poke around. Get a blog, podcast and include a section on your site that offers the opportunity for readers to look through your articles (you can also post these on your blog). If you have a book video add that to your site as well. And speaking of Web sites—is yours easy to navigate? If it's not all the content in the world won't help you. This isn't a trip to Oz, people actually want to find their way back and unless there's a helpful scarecrow along the way to show them how to find what they need, it's likely they'll end up on someone else's site instead.

Red Hot Book Sales on the Internet

"Some say Google is God. Others say Google is Satan. But if they think Google is too powerful, remember that with search engines unlike other companies, all it takes is a single click to go to another search engine."—Sergey Brin

It's no secret that the Net keeps changing all the time; what is a secret to many is how to make the most of the Net and sell some books. When it comes down to it, that's the No. 1 focus of publishers and authors alike. The Net has become the place to go for book sales, but it's more than just having your book listed on Amazon.com or your own Web site, it's about getting people to know about it. With millions of Web sites coming online every month, that task is getting tougher and tougher each day.

It seems like only yesterday we were telling you that reciprocal linking was *the* way to go to get traffic. What is reciprocal linking? Well, it's where you give a link on your site to someone else and they give one to you. This tactic may have worked in 2006 but it's no longer a good idea. Why? Because search engines are now looking at high quality one-way (inbound) links. Says Susan Gilbert, AME's SEO expert: "Google has declared 2007 as the year of the incoming link—high quality, one-way links. Now more than ever, it is important to create a

long term site building presence that focuses on the community aspect of the World Wide Web."

A backlink is a link which directs others toward your site. They are sometimes referred to as inbound links. These are links that go from another Web site to your Web site. But it's more than just that, it's also about having backlinks that matter. If you haven't done a vanity search on yourself in a while try this: Google your name and see what sites come up (when you Google your name use the "+" sign between your first and last name for a more accurate search). Now take a quick peek at the list of sites and see how they rank according to Google, are they on the 20th page of a Google search or are they on the 1st or 2nd page? These are all indicators of high quality, high traffic sites. Now look at the sites that are in your topic/market. Ideally, you want every site linking to you to be your market. That's the definition of a high quality, high traffic site.

The number of backlinks that your site has is an indication of how popular or important it is according to the major search engines. Backlinks are important for SEO, because search engines, such as Google, Yahoo, and MSN, will give more credit to those sites with a good number of quality backlinks. They will then consider these sites more relevant than others in the results pages of a search query.

Most search engines will want Web sites to have a level playing field, and so will more often than not look for natural links that have been built slowly over time. Link farms or companies that promise hundreds of backlinks will do nothing but get your site delisted by the search engines. Once this happens, it could take months, and even years to get it back online. (Delisting means that the site no longer comes up in search engines).

Although it can be fairly easy to manipulate the links on a Web page in order to achieve a higher ranking, it is a lot harder to influence a search engine with external backlinks from another site. This is why these feature so highly in a search engine's algorithm.

According to research we've done, there are a number of ways in which you can get additional backlinks to your Web site.

1. Reciprocal Linking

This is where you link to another site that provides the same service or product as you and they in turn have a link to your site on theirs. While very popular in the past, this exchange of links is not as valuable as one-way links.

2. Site Submissions

Submit links for your site to directories which allow free submissions, or if you can afford it, some paid directories. There are many sites which offer a service where you can submit your site's details to numerous Web sites. Plus, if you want, you can always create your own directory of similar Web sites.

3. Blogging

This has now become an integral part of the Internet, and is one of the most effective ways of linking.

You either have the choice of placing a few words or comments on to someone else's blog, or you may want to link to them from your own blog. However, with so many people creating blogs and wanting to link to each other's blogs, this can be extremely time- consuming.

4. Articles

This is another way of getting great backlinks. It's vital that any articles you write are on the subject, informative and thorough in relation to your site.

Quality articles published on article sites are a great way of getting even more backlinks to your site.

Always include a resource box at the end, as this will include that all

important backlink to your site. This resource box should also include a short biography regarding you and your site.

5. Social Bookmarking

This is a way to record your favorite sites online at the various social bookmarking sites, and that way the search engine spiders pick up your bookmarks and follow these backlinks to your Web sites.

6. Creating Feeder Sites

Adding a MySpace or Squidoo page with links back to your Web site is extremely beneficial and expands your online presence at the same time.

The above are just a few ways that you can get backlinks to your Web site to help it rank more highly in the search engines and attract more traffic. Using these techniques you should see an increase in the volume of traffic arriving at your Web site.

The important thing is to take action today. Things are getting more and more competitive, with thousands of Web sites coming online every day. If you want to succeed online (and everyone needs to be online), you'll want to get started now.

Increasing ranking and traffic are going to be our continued focus in the months and weeks to come. As offline markets become more populated and less accessible, the Internet is *the* place to go to sell your book.

Don't Be an Expert, Be a Filter (Secrets to Selling More Books)

"The Internet? We are not interested in it."—Bill Gates, 1993

So how much would you pay someone to sift through your e-mail each morning, deleting the garbage and presenting you with the 5 (out of 500) e-mails you need to respond to? If you already have someone like that, lucky you! But if you don't, I bet this sounds like a dream. In the age of a constant flood of information, consumers will pay good money for a filter. So if you want to sell books, be the go-to person for your market.

If you're wondering how to become a filter, give some thought to the filters you may not even be aware of. For example, in the book publishing market I can think of two major ones: Dan Poynter and John Kremer. Both of them are filters. Why? Well, they have zeroed in on their focused market and have become the go-to people for everything publishing and marketing. We have structured Author Marketing Experts the same way: all book marketing, all the time.

While you'll find filters in different markets, they share a lot of the same characteristics. Filters are out there weeding through information so you don't have to, and then they are posting their findings on their Web site, blog, or talking about it in their podcast. Sometimes they're doing a combination of all of these things to keep their readers informed.

Next, filters are so laser focused in their market that not only can they filter out the "noise" for you so you don't have to, they can then

compartmentalize the noise into sub-filters. These sub-filters become even more significant, and here's why. Increasingly, we are living in an age of customization. I mean when was the last time you bought an entire CD or read an entire newspaper? More than likely you're buying your music one song at a time on iTunes, or you're reading your news selectively or, in many cases, through RSS feeds that allow you to tap into only the content that you want. We'll put all of this together in a moment, but for now, start thinking about the customized element to what you're doing.

The tools we have at our disposal (many of them free) make becoming a filter extremely easy. Blogs, podcasts, RSS feeds, all of these help us to build our filter and therefore, build our audience. But before you launch headlong into filtering, consider these quick tips:

- Becoming a filter requires dedication, but the benefits will pay off in ways you can't imagine (and many that will fill your bank account). When I talk about dedication, what I mean is *you* must read every publication that's out there on your topic so your reader doesn't have to, and more than that, you should read outside of your area of expertise because you never know where the big ideas will come from. Take an afternoon, once a month, and devour your reading material. I read an average of 27 magazines a month. Yes, it can be overwhelming (at times), but the upside is that you are constantly staying dialed into your market. That's the first step to becoming a filter.
- Be crystal clear about what you're filtering. If you're sitting in a huge market like, let's say automotive, you probably don't want to talk about every single car that's out there or being developed. Perhaps you want to focus only on hybrid vehicles. Now your direction is clear. Once you have this direction, your Web site should reflect that. Your Web site should be the first marketing piece you look at as you're developing your focus.
- Next, ask yourself if your book is a filter. If it's not, it should be.

Being a filter is tougher for fiction authors of course, but you nonfiction folks should have no trouble leveraging this into your books.

- Blog, podcast, and write, write, write on trends, reviews, hot new ideas and things that are so-so. I always tell people that I am my own test lab. If you want to try something new in marketing, check with me first. It's likely that I've already tested it on myself. In fact, all of our programs are built from things I tried first. If I don't like it, or it didn't work, I won't sell it. That's a filter. And I'm not just talking about filtering stuff you can offer to a client, be objective! Be a filter for the competition, too, and by all means, send people to other vendors if they can offer what you can't. Remember, the customer/reader came to you first.
- Make customization your best friend. So, let's use our car example again. Let's say you wrote a book on hybrid cars and your site is all about hybrids as is your blog, newsletter and podcast. But now you have built your brand sufficiently, and it's time to break out into new areas. How about this: ebooks for focused markets. Quick and easy tips, like "Buying a hybrid for seniors" or "Buying a hybrid for families." The key to remember is that each of these markets has its own specific needs. When it comes to buying a car, the needs of a family are different from those of a senior or single.
- What's your brand? Everyone's a brand, even Nora Roberts. Becoming a filter will help you brand yourself. Remember that people don't buy a book, they buy a brand. If you're clear on your brand, you'll sell more books. Figuring out your branding doesn't need to be complicated, but it does need to be focused. I'm not talking about the kind of branding that requires hours of logo development. I'm not even talking about a brand that's necessarily original. Yes, you want to be unique, but the key isn't doing something no one else is doing, the key is doing it better.

So how can you become a filter? What's your market and focus? Perhaps you're thinking that you can apply some of these principles, but not all of them. That's okay! The thing to remember is that being an expert is passé. I don't know if you've noticed, but these days everyone's an expert. They're a dime a dozen. What you want to be is a filter.

Bah, Humbug: Ignore Christmas—Long Live Chinese New Year!

"America Online customers are upset because the company has decided to allow advertising in its chat rooms. I can see why: you got computer sex, you can download pornography, people are making dates with 10-year-olds. Hey, what's this? A Pepsi ad? They're ruining the integrity of the Internet!"—Jay Leno

If you're in the midst of gearing up for the big Christmas selling season I have a question: What about the other hundreds of holidays throughout the year?

Everyone digs in around Thanksgiving to prepare for the upcoming holiday season, and while I'm not discouraging you from pushing this sales angle, there are more holidays to consider than just Christmas. You can market to anything from Chinese New Year to Labor Day—depending on the book/product you're marketing it might even tie-in better to a nonpeak sales season. Here are a few quick tips to get you started: Educate yourself first: getting to know your holidays is important. The last thing you want to do is pitch your product on a somber holiday. Also, you want to make sure that your message matches the holiday you're positioning it on.

Picking your dates: download the Calgoo.com calendar if you want a full listing of dates you can pitch your book/product

to. The calendar offers everything from US holidays (even the obscure ones) as well as Asian, Canadian and European Holidays. Stick with your plan: Sometimes you'll find that some holidays work better than others. It's fine to experiment, but once you have found a few holidays that work for you, you'll want to consistently market to them. Getting inroads into a particular culture is not just dependent on your message, consistency in promotion is important, too.

Red Hot Tips

"The telephone wire, as we know it, has become too slow and too small to handle Internet traffic. It took 75 years for telephones to be used by 50 million customers, but it took only four years for the Internet to reach that many users."—Lori Valigra

Is Your Video Online?

Over 134 million Americans viewed video online. Was your video one of them? If it wasn't, you might want to consider it. Video is hot, and the market for online viewing is growing every day. Don't believe me? Check out this article: **www.marketingvox.com/google-video-sites-capture-lions-share-of-videos-viewed-viewers-in-july-032982**. Also, it's interesting to note (but not surprising) that of all the video sites, Google video captured the lion's share of the audience.

SEO Like a Pro!

If you think being your own search engine optimization expert is too tough of a job, think again. There's a very simple thing you can do right now to get more of those fantastic incoming links to your site. Google (aka controller of the Internet) loves incoming links, but the trick is, they must be high-quality and relevant. What this means is that you can go after sites, blogs and online magazines and offer content in the form of an original article or comment on their blog postings. All of these links will get spidered in Google—and viola! Welcome to the wild world of SEO.

Never Use a Squeeze Page as Your Main Web Site

Squeeze pages are popular among Web marketiers. These are pages designed to "squeeze" you out of your e-mail by offering you fabulous (free) incentives or opportunities to buy. When done correctly, squeeze pages can be a great way to grow your list, but the problem is, many folks use these as standalone Web sites, which is a huge mistake. Squeeze pages are fine if they're a page within your site, but when they're a site onto themselves this becomes tricky.

Why? Well, the squeeze page is designed to block consumers from getting to content unless they give you their e-mail address. The same is true for search engines, but the problem is, search engines can't fill out forms. This means that they can't spider your site either, since they can't get to all of your fabulous content. Second, journalists are not going to give up their e-mail address to get to your media room. So if a press person lands on your site and finds nothing but a squeeze page, you've now lost a media interview, too.

Tip for Freebies

If you're giving away freebies, remember that the best kinds of freebies are things you'd normally sell. Why? Because otherwise it's junk. Here are some tips for targeting your freebies:

1. Make sure they're relevant to your audience. Read: give them something they can use. An example of this is the freebie authors get when they sign up for the Book Marketing Expert Newsletter: a list of the top 50 media contacts in the U.S., which includes listings for *The Today Show, Good Morning America* and Oprah.
2. Let your freebie work for you. What I mean is this: don't let a single freebie out your door without contact information, special offers or some other tie-in to help guide customers back to your door.
3. Turn your freebie into an ethical bribe: don't let a single freebie

out your door without getting the customer's contact info (preferably e-mail). In order to get the freebie they need to give you something, it's that simple. If you don't, then all the freebies you send out will be a waste of your time and effort.

Does Your Blog Do the Job?

By now you've probably heard plenty about the importance of blogging and of continually offering fresh content. But another way to keep your blog relevant is to have a blogroll—a list of other bloggers, preferably in your genre—ideally with reciprocal links. Google revealed this nugget in a recent patent filing.

How do you find the best blogs for your blogroll? One good site is Technorati—you can search by topic and see which bloggers have the biggest blogrolls. Those are the ones worth linking to—and seeing if they'll link you in return!

Tips Section: Brought to you by MonkeyCMedia

"If at first you don't succeed, call it version 1.0."—author unknown

Don't Forget the Small Stuff

As is often the case, sometimes the smallest things make the biggest difference. This is the story when it comes to anchor text. Anchor text is the clickable text of a link. As an example, there are two ways I can link back to the index page of the MCM Web site; while they both go to the same place, the latter is more effective because the anchor text is optimized with keywords.

1. monkeyCmedia
2. Design house specializing in Author Web sites

Google Bombing is an example of just how effective anchor text can be. A few months ago, a Google search for the term "miserable failure" would have taken you directly to the official biography of George W. Bush. Why? Because mass amounts of people used the term as a link to the President's bio (this is known as Google bombing). Now, the same search will bring you to numerous articles about this topic, like this article for instance: **news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/3298443.stm**.

So, next time you ask someone to link their site to yours, be sure to give them powerful anchor text that includes a few powerful keywords. Just another step toward world domination as you strive to increase your page rank and sell more books!!!

Reciprocal Links: Are They Worth the Hassle?

There was a day when reciprocal links were a great way to get added exposure to your site—but times are changing and reciprocal links are fast becoming a thing of the past.

A reciprocal link is a text and/or banner link to a site that, somewhere in its pages, carries a similar text/banner link to your site.

Most requests are automated, for that reason two problems come up. First, you get swamped with link requests from Link Farms, people who have never even looked at your site. Second, the value and legitimacy of those links are less than stellar. A good reciprocal link would be one that provides value to your client base and also drives traffic from other relevant sites back to yours.

When you link with another site you want to make sure that the site is relevant in content (that you share a similar audience), otherwise what's the point? Now, to contradict that, it is valuable to have numerous inbound links, but if those links are from sites with a low page ranking, then it doesn't do you much good after all. Google weights Web sites with a PageRank system (PR) and your PR is directly reflected by the PR of sites that link to you: **www.google.com/technology**.

Targeted traffic is a great reason to seek reciprocal links, so in addition to partnering with relevant sites, make sure that your inbound link doesn't get buried. Your link should be listed as a resource and provide value for the site linking to you, just as you should provide a resources page on your site. In fact, I prefer the term *resource* page to *links* page—it's more enticing, don't you think?

Best Kept Secret: Google Image Search

Recently I discovered a great way to increase your page ranking and get added exposure to your Web site. Thank you, Google.

Google Image Search is a great way to increase inbound traffic to your site. Because it is so much less competitive than keyword searches, you will notice a marked increase in your page visits. Please note: New Web sites will take time to index (up to six months) before this technique will begin to show results. Seasoned (or sites that have been live for at least six months) will notice immediate results. Even so, you should do this immediately, regardless of how long your site has been live.

Here's how it works:

Ensure that all of your images on your Web site have "ALT tags" and "picture title tags." Often what will happen is people searching for images in Google Image Search will inadvertently find your site through your image descriptions. More traffic, and more inbound links will increase your ranking with Google and increase your chances of being listed higher in a search. Be sure to use relevant keywords to describe your images.

That's all there is to it. This is working especially well now because so few people are using this technique, but hurry, this won't last long. Once everyone on the Net discovers our secret, this SEO technique will become diluted and less effective.

The Human Touch

It used to be that search engines like Google used algorithms to determine the relevance of your site's content. Consequently, it has been an uphill battle to determine what they place the most importance on and how to get your name higher in the ranking. Recently, this trend is slowly changing. Search engines are moving toward a hand's-on approach with the integration of a human editorial process.

What this means for us is that offering valuable content will increase your page ranking; the more value your site offers your client, the more kudos you will get from Google. Don't be afraid to give things

away, including information. Here are some ideas to increase your site's value:

- valuable and relevant content
- links to references
- free downloads
- inclusion in the DMOZ
- ease of navigation
- back links, etc.

The more you offer, the more likely Google's team will be to include you as a relevant Web site with valuable information.

About Outbound Links

It's true that outbound links do not help much when it comes to Search Engine Optimization (SEO), but they are still a good thing. Here's why: search engines are looking to see if you are offering something of value on your site. Chances are if you offer outbound links, Google will see that as a good thing. Every little bit helps.

Be sure to have links open in a new window so you do not lose your visitor. And be careful that you do not send them away from your index page—a great place for links is on a Resource page.

This is a great way to give your visitors added value. Just be sure that your links indeed offer something of value! Also, remember to check your site for broken links at least once a month. Broken links affect how search engines index your site and can hurt your page ranking.

Here's a very useful FREE tool to check for broken links: **www.dead-links.com**.

Also, your Webmaster should be running a test as well.

The Art of Writing Web Copy

While many of us are professional authors, we have no idea how to write for the Web. It's an art in itself, and it could make or break the success of your Web site. Here's some food for thought:

1. Write in narrow columns of text—they are easier to read and less likely to fatigue your reader.
2. Use bullet points and Read More buttons—research shows that people will scan a page for interesting tidbits of information before they read it. If you have a lot to say, try summarizing it into a succinct paragraph and then link it to the rest of the article on a landing page deeper in your site.
3. Stay on point—you should distill your Web copy down to the most important points and eliminate everything else. You have less than a second to grab someone's attention, don't risk overwhelming your reader.
4. Use captivating headlines—Be sure to make your message obvious, use headlines, lists and bold text to convey your message.
5. Use links—an obvious benefit of Web writing is that you have an opportunity to link to other important areas on your site. Here you can reference resources, news sources, audio clips, other relevant Web sites and your own call-to-action.
6. Use relevant keywords—try to use words that are relevant to the content within your site or article, words that other people might type into a search engine looking for the information you offer. The more you can do to help people find you, the better.
   —MonkeyCMedia (**www.monkeycmedia.com**)

Tips Section: Brought to You by Susan Gilbert

"Men are from Mars. Women are from Venus. Computers are from hell."—author unknown

Three Things You Should Know About Social Networking Sites

1. They are becoming a critical component of information flow on the Internet. Over 400 million people are involved with a social networking Web site.
2. They are now an important method for making both social and business contacts regardless of the type of business you are in. Sites like **www.linkedin.com** and **www.ryze.com** are becoming valuable resources.
3. You can use their power to change the level of success for your Web site. Sites like **delicious.com** and **www.stumbleupon.com** are driving massive amounts of traffic to commercial Web sites.

To see the top social networking sites and figure out how they can help your business, go to **www.joomlajump.com/content/view/118/74**.

Online or Offline, This Is the Key to Success

There is one key to success online and let me tell you now, technology is a piece of it.

Yes, the technical side is important and has a very key role to play. Get the technology right without another critical ingredient and failure is guaranteed.

What is this magic sauce? People.

"People" are the key to your success, online or off.

What a bizarre thing to say! But it is true. Let me explain.

Take a look at this list and tell me what they all have in common:

- subscribers
- traffic
- links
- social media votes
- comments
- search engine results
- advertisers
- sales

Got it? They all rely on other people!

You might think that SEO is all about technical tweaks and tricks. Black arts, keyword stuffing, getting the right number of keywords in the right places. But I would argue the best Search Engine Optimizers are actually masters of psychology—Social Optimizers if you will.

Your best links come from other bloggers. Links and anchor text are key to search results. Social Media is partly about phrasing headlines and descriptions, but it is mostly about getting votes. Votes come from people.

Get the people side right and you have won over half the battle.

Focus on people first; when your audience is happy, you will find the rest a whole lot easier!

Are You Trustworthy?

As you work to increase your page ranking, one of the things that major search engines take into consideration is trustworthiness. Sound silly? It's true, Google is looking to provide their customers with the same level of value that you offer your customers. One way to do this is to include a privacy policy on your site—this shows that you are

serious about providing valuable service to your users and that you have integrity and a sense of responsibility. Of course, back links are heavily weighted—if other sites are willing to link to you, then Google assumes that you offer something of value.—*Jeniffer Thompson of Monkey C Media* (**www.monkeycmedia.com**)

StumbleUpon Strategy

Many of you may be familiar with StumbleUpon, a Web 2.0 site. But I don't think there are many people who know how to use it effectively. You can definitely get a lot of traffic to your Web site or blog if you just know how to use it correctly.

There are over 2 million StumbleUpon users, which is really good for such a young site. It was just acquired by eBay for $75 million dollars, so you know these numbers are just going to escalate in the coming months.

StumbleUpon's recommendation system allows you to discover sites based upon "word of mouth"—the idea is that it will show you sites based upon the personal preference of like-minded surfers. This is a very important aspect to get traffic to your own site. A record of your "stumbled upon" sites can be found in your generated StumbleUpon blog.

Tip No. 1: Create One Theme/Category per StumbleUpon Account

Who says you can only have one account? No one! You should have one account per major topic. Do you write about more than one subject? Some of you may write both a nonfiction business book, and also a romance novel. Set up one account for business and one for literature. There are categories that you can preselect using StumbleUpon and this is important for the type of market you want to get into. You'll need a new e-mail address for each new account.

Tip No. 2: Using StumbleUpon to Get a Ton of Traffic

Choose your friends wisely. StumbleUpon is similar to MySpace because you can create your own social bookmarking page. StumbleUpon will allow you to choose friends with similar interests. The first thing you want to do is add friends who are interested in the market you want to get traffic to (makes sense, right? You have to know the market you are targeting).

So, if you have written a book about knitting, you only select friends who are interested in knitting (StumbleUpon will allow you to select categories or just search for a specific topic) and then recommend they StumbleUpon that site. Another hot tip: There are StumbleUpon groups available you can join with similar interests—you can get almost instant traffic that way if you join a popular group.

The more friends you have, the more traffic you can get—however, the more friends you have that are interested in your topic specifically, the more targeted traffic you will get (and that's what you really want).

Tip No. 3: Model Your Landing Page to Already Popular StumbleUpon Sites

If you look on a person's favorite Web site list you can see what people have recommended in the past. Use that to your advantage. Model your Web site to what they've liked in the past by making it similar in structure, layout, etc.

One super tip that will help you build a list quickly: You can create a page that has video (StumbleUpon users like video). You create a teaser video on your site, and call that "Part 1." Then say, "If you'd like to see Part 2, just enter your name and e-mail address." Actually what you are doing is just breaking up your video, showing the first few minutes, and for the rest you can tell people to put in their contact information

to see the rest. Voilà!—you are building a targeted list for you to stay in touch with.

Tip No. 4: Your Title Is Everything

Just like the headline of an article, the title of your Web site attracts attention. It should contain your keywords and be compelling. Your best bet: See what sites your "friends" are recommending and create a similar style.

Tip No. 5: Advertise with StumbleUpon

You can actually advertise your Web site with StumbleUpon at: **www.stumbleupon.com/ads**. Right now the pricing is at 5 cents per targeted visit. Your Web site gets an increased weight (the likelihood that your site will be stumbled upon) than someone who is submitting for free.

It does take a while to get a campaign to work and it can take up to a week for you to get approved. But if you can be patient, there is a good chance it could be quite worthwhile.

Bottom line: Create good content and emulate already successful StumbleUpon sites. The key to success with StumbleUpon is to build a site that people WANT to "stumble" upon. Good luck!

—*Susan Gilbert, Search Engine Marketing Expert, JoomlaJump.com*

Afterword: Web 4.0 Predictions

"Looking at the proliferation of personal Web pages on the net, it looks like very soon everyone on earth will have 15 megabytes of fame."—MG Siriam

To put the evolution of the Web in perspective, we should cover some basic history.

In the original Web (Web 1.0) which evolved from the PC era in the 1980s, Web 1.0 took hold in the 90s when people started to create an online presence for their businesses and became a source of information for researching topics.

Web 2.0 is built on the Web 1.0 facilities with blogs, introduced in 1995 but mainstream popularized several years later in 2000 and on. The Web changed my life and probably yours as well. I can't live without Wikipedia or Google which has become the term individuals use when they search for something, "Just Google it."

Web 2.0 encouraged community and user-generated content with social networking sites like MySpace and Facebook. There are specific niche social networking sites and social bookmarking—the ability to store your bookmarks online, are also shared with others making it a community entity.

Web 3.0 is the brainchild of Tim Berners-Lee, largely credited for inventing the World Wide Web in the first place. It's more commonly called the Semantic Web. The idea is, to quote Lee, "I have a dream for the Web [in which computers] become capable of analyzing all the data on the Web—the content, links, and transactions between people and computers. A 'Semantic Web,' which should make this possible, has

yet to emerge, but when it does, the day-to-day mechanisms of trade, bureaucracy and our daily lives will be handled by machines talking to machines. The 'intelligent agents' people have touted for ages will finally materialize."

The opportunities of the semantic Web are limitless, and I can't wait. But that's not Web 4.0. Web 4.0 is about making connections, about serendipity and about the network taking initiative.

Predicted to take place somewhere around 2020, here are some examples of what that might look like for me:

- I'm booked on a flight from Seattle to San Diego. It's cancelled. My phone knows that I'm on the flight, knows that it's cancelled and knows what flights I should consider instead. It uses semantic data but it also has permission to interrupt me and tell me about it. Much more important, it knows what my colleagues are doing in response to this event and tells me. "Follow me" gets a lot easier.
- Google watches what I search. It watches what other people like me search. Every day, it shows me things I ought to be searching for that I'm not. And it introduces me to people who are searching for what I'm searching for.
- I visit a blog for the first time. My browser knows what sort of stories I am interested in and shows me highlights of the new blog based on that history.
- I'm about to buy something from a vendor (in a store with a smart card or online). At the last minute, Web 4.0 jumps in and asks if I want it cheaper, or if I want it from a vendor with a better reputation. Not based on some gamed system, but based on what a small trusted circle believes.

Web 4.0 will connect the different intelligence services and guide us through our daily decisions.

To Market!

"The man who wakes up and finds himself famous hasn't been asleep."—anonymous

At the end of any reference book I always say, "Okay, well this is great but now what do I do?" Then the book goes into a pile of other well-read material and that's the extent of my progress. If you feel the same way, you're certainly not alone. I want *Red Hot Internet Publicity* to be different. I want you to put down this book with not only a mountain of inspiration, but a plan as well. Book marketing isn't an easy task. It takes time, effort, and a lot of sweat equity and most of all, it takes a plan.

One of the first things you'll learn is that not every marketing campaign is right for every book. While Internet publicity works for about 99 percent of books, the "how" always changes. Will what you learned in this book generate enough sales to make your own book a bestseller? Possibly. But keep in mind that the term "bestseller" can be a slippery slope if not traversed carefully.

We align bestseller status with success, but what exactly constitutes a success, anyway? One of the biggest misconceptions about the book industry is the definition of success. The term "bestseller," for example, is by definition, a confusing statement. A book doesn't have to be selling hundreds of thousands of copies for it to be a bestseller. In fact,

I've known books that have only sold three thousand copies to hit *The New York Times* bestseller list.

Publishers have tried for years to unravel the secrets of creating a bestseller and none of them have (or likely will) figure it out. The "tipping point" of what makes a single title successful is a mystery. But the indisputable key to success is to get your book to market, but not just any market—the right market. The more we dig into our niches, the more we take our marketing campaigns an inch wide and a mile deep, the closer we'll get to tipping our books in the direction of being successful. The reason good books "hit" is because they tap into their correct audience.

Several years ago there was a book out called *The Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood*. This book was only mildly successful when it was first released. It wasn't until the author, knowing her market, got the book into the hands of the readers who would most enjoy it: women in reading clubs. It quickly became a hit with reading groups and the rest, as they say, is history.

Can one segment of a market leverage the success of a book? Absolutely. Why? Because if you reach the exact right market for your book, word of your book will spread like wildfire and then, just like an out of control blaze, the message of the book will begin to drift into segments that might be considered secondary markets. Then, a bestseller is born. The key to this "wildfire" is to dig into your market and go straight to your reader. Now you've found the secret formula to success.

The single most exciting reason book marketing over the Internet is so successful is because you're only one point and click away from your target audience. Even the most novice of marketers can put together a campaign that is not only manageable, but effective. I've seen a lot of authors through the years carrying their hopes and dreams with them within the pages of a 6 x 9 book with a glossy cover. I've seen

these same authors plunk down thousands of dollars for marketing that promised a lot and delivered.

The key thing is to keep your focus on your readership—regardless of their size. When you start to focus on the bestseller lists (that are required to appeal to the masses), you lose sight of the real objective of your campaign: getting your book to your reader.

Remember as you embark on your campaign, you have many marketing ideas from which to choose. This book alone could keep you busy for years if you applied every principle you learned. The key isn't to do "everything" but rather, to do everything that's right for your specific reader and to keep your goals safely in check.

One of the biggest reasons I've seen campaigns fail is because of the misaligned expectations of the author and the need to do "everything at once." So now you have this book and you have a list of to-do's you've culled from it, the next best thing you can do is pick just one—one thing you'll start with and focus on that with lightening precision. When that's accomplished, move onto the next item on your list.

Slow and steady wins the race and this is especially true in book marketing. It's also important to re-evaluate your definition of "success." An author's vision of success (much like their marketing plan) will vary from book to book, as will the goals that will get you there. If your vision of success is getting on Oprah, then the goals that you'll need to put in place to get you there will look very different from someone who wants to saturate the Internet with their message.

But those goals or steps are important and, unfortunately, often overlooked. Breaking a bigger marketing campaign into smaller segments (goals) and then celebrating when each one is reached is important to keeping your marketing momentum going. Why? Because the goal of Oprah or anything similar takes a lot of work and a lot of action steps. It could take years to realize this final destination and in the meantime, you want and need milestones to celebrate and acknowledge your progress.

We are wildly fortunate. We live in a world of citizen-generated media and publishing options that allow authors to see their work in print almost immediately. We have access to national and international markets that we can tap into with a click of the mouse. Never before has there ever been a better time to market your book. Yes, there are a lot of other books being published everyday, but the markets aren't shrinking, they're expanding as each new book finds a home.

Your reader (who was previously overlooked by bigger publishing houses) is now being catered to and has suddenly acquired a thirst for more. That's where your book comes in.

When it comes to publishing, the secret to success isn't complicated at all. It's not about flashy book parties (although I've never turned down an invitation to one), it's not about how many book signings you're able to get (because frankly, book signings aren't the best way to sell a book), the real secret to success isn't a secret at all, it's simply about getting to market—one reader at a time.

Red Hot Resources

Books You'll Love

Anderson, Chris *The Long Tail* (Hyperion)

Brown, Bruce Cameron *How to Use the Internet to Advertise, Promote and Market Your Business or Website with Little or No Money* (Atlantic Publishing Company)

Demopoulos, Ted *What No One Ever Tells You About Blogging and Podcasting: Real-Life Advice from 101 People Who Successfully Leverage the Power of the Blogosphere* (Kaplan Business)

Eisenberg, Bryan and Eisenberg, Jeffrey *Call to Action* (Wizard Academy Press)

Eisenberg, Bryan, Eisenberg, Jeffrey, and Davis, Lisa *Waiting for Your Cat to Bark?: Persuading Customers When They Ignore Marketing* (Nelson Business)

Eisenberg, Bryan *Persuasive Online Copywriting: How to Take Your Words to the Bank* (Wizard Academy Press)

Frazer, JD *Money for Content and Your Clicks for Free* (Wiley)

Godin, Seth *Small Is the New Big: and 183 Other Riffs, Rants, and Remarkable Business Ideas* (Portfolio)

Godin, Seth *Meatball Sundae: Is Your Marketing Out of Sync?* (Portfolio)

Hall, Scott *The Blog Ahead* (Morgan James Publishing)

Holtz, Shel and Demopoulos *Blogging for Business* (Kaplan Publishing)

Hughes, Mark *Buzzmarketing* (Portfolio)

Joyner, Mark *The Irresistible Offer: How to Sell Your Product or Service in 3 Seconds or Less* (Wiley)
Krug, Steve *Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability (2nd Edition)* (New Riders Press)
Mansfield, Richard *How to Do Everything with Second Life (*McGraw-Hill Osborne Media)
Risdahl, Sherman Aliza *The Everything Blogging Book: Publish Your Ideas, Get Feedback, and Create Your Own Worldwide Network* (Adams Media)
Risdahl, Sherman Aliza *Streetwise eCommerce: Establish Your Online Business, Expand Your Reach, and Watch Your Profits Soar!* (Adams Media)
Robbins, Sarah and Bell, Mark *Second Life For Dummies* (For Dummies)
Rymaszewski, Michael and Au, Wagner James *Second Life: The Official Guide* (Sybex)
Thompson, Jeniffer *Web Site Wow, Turn Your Web Site Into Your Most Powerful Marketing Tool* (MCM Publishing)
Van Orden, Jason *Promoting Your Podcast: The Ultimate Guide to Building an Audience of Raving Fans* (Larstan Publishing)
Vitale, Joe The E-Code: *33 Internet Superstars Reveal 43 Ways to Make Money Online Almost Instantly—Using Only E-mail* (Wiley)

Web Site Designers We Love!

Susan Gilbert, Search Engine Marketing Expert, helping authors *Make More Sales, Create More Buzz, Find More Fans*. Jump on Susan's Web 2.0 train to success today! Sign up for her free "Web 2.0 Quick Start Guide" at **www.joomlajump.com**.

Jeniffer Thompson is the cofounder of Monkey C Media (**www.monkeycmedia.com**), a full-service design house specializing in author Web sites and book cover design.

Search Optimization Tools

Meta Tag Analyzer (**www.scrubtheweb.com/abs/meta-check.html**)

Track Your Traffic (**www.urchin.com**)

Link Popularity (**www.linkpopularity.com**)

Free search engine optimization tools to optimize, analyze, promote and maintain your site (**www.webceo.com**)

Keyword Tool (**inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion**)

Compare your site to your competition (**www.webconfs.com/similar-page-checker.php**)

Spider Simulator—find out what search engines see when they spider your site (**www.webconfs.com/search-engine-spider-simulator.php**)

Back links with Page Rank—see who links back to your site and what their page rank is (**www.webconfs.com/anchor-text-analysis.php**)

Similar Page Checker—do you have similar pages that will ding your page ranking? Find out here (**www.webconfs.com**)

Marketleap Search Engine Optimization Tools—several great tools to help your page rank (**www.marketleap.com/services/freetools/default.htm**)

Customer Focus Calculator—does your Web site focus on you or your customers? Find out here (**www.futurenowinc.com/wewe.htm**)

Blog Directories and Analytics Tools

www.google.com/trends

www.google.com/webmastertools

www.icerocket.com

www.blogpulse.com

www.summize.com
www.google.com/blogsearch
www.xinureturns.com

Security Sites

Your Computer's Security—how secure is your computer? (**grc.com/default.htm**)

Great Places to List Your Event

(whether it's in person or an online event)

www.upcoming.org
www.eventful.com

Social Bookmarking Sites

www.delicious.com
www.digg.com
www.stumbleupon.com
www.technorati.com

Just for Fun

What's Everyone Else on Earth Doing Today? Webcams around the Globe (**www.earthcamonline.com**)

More than 3,000 free widgets for your desktop (**widgets.yahoo.com**)

Spice up Your Writing with 1001 free fonts (**www.1001freefonts.com**)

Warp and distort images (**www.debugmode.com/winmorph**)

Free Forum Avatars—didn't you always want to be a singing cat? (**www.avatarsdb.com**)

Beat Writer's Block with some fun (**www.afunzone.com**)

What Does Your Hero's Name Look Like in Chinese Characters? (**www.chinesenames.org**)

Bored? Create your own caricature (**www.magixl.com/heads/poir.html**)

Other Helpful Stuff

Free point-and-click toolbar creator (**www.conduit.com**)

Free autoresponder (**www.autosenders.com**)

Track keywords posted in online forums and message boards (**www.boardtracker.com**)

Free Google sitemap generator (**www.sitemapdoc.com**)

Headline Analyzer—are you using the best headlines? Check here. Learn if you need to improve your headline to grab people's attention (**www.aminstitute.com/headline/index.htm**)

Free software creates PC Videos then streams it on your Web site (**www.debugmode.com/wink**)

Free graphics editor (**freeserifsoftware.com/software/PhotoPlus/default.asp**)

Free Web site design software (**freeserifsoftware.com/software/WebPlus/default.asp**)

Free antivirus software (**free.grisoft.com/freeweb.php/doc/1**)

Free firewall (**www.zonelabs.com**)

Data recovery freeware (**aplusfreeware.com/categories/util/recovery.html**)

Free photos for your Web site (**www.freefoto.com/index.jsp**)

Create free presentations in Flash (**www.powerbullet.com**)

Free FTP software for uploading your site to the Web (**sourceforge.net/projects/filezilla**)

Get Started with HTML (**www.w3.org/MarkUp/Guide**)

CSS quick tutorial (**www.htmlhelp.com/reference/css/quick-tutorial.html**)

Free host for your mailing list (**www.yahoogroups.com**)
Cool stuff for writers (**www.coolstuff4writers.com**)
What bloggers are talking about you? (**technorati.com**)
Unleash the IdeaVirus, free download (**www.sethgodin.com/ideavirus**)
Manage creative ideas with The Literary Machine, free download (**sommestad.com/lm.htm**)

Big Media Blogs

Ready to read and pitch some of the biggest blogs in the country? Here's a great list to get started with. Everything from politics to wine to what Britney Spears is doing now, follow the blogs Americans read.

An Obsession With Food (And Wine)
E-mail: **derrick.schneider@gmail.com**
Coverage: National
URL: **www.obsessionwithfood.com**
Focus: This blog focuses on food, cooking and wine. Good variety of posts, blogger also reviews books.

Best of the Web Today
Coverage: National via *The Wall Street Journal*
URL: **www.opinionjournal.com/best**
Focus: Best of the Web Today looks at some of the most high-profile news stories from around the world. Keep in mind: if news doesn't fit into a print publication or Web site's format or coverage, a journalist may cover it in his/her blog. E-mail is the best way to send information, as bloggers use the Internet and computer technology to create their blogs.

Blog Herald
E-mail: **editor@blogherald.com**

Coverage: International
URL: **www.blogherald.com**
Focus: The Blog Herald serves as a premium source of blog and blogging related news for bloggers. Keep in mind: if news doesn't fit into a print publication or Web site's format or coverage, a journalist may cover it in his/her blog. E-mail is the best way to send information, as bloggers use the Internet and computer technology to create their blogs.

Blog of a Bookslut
E-mail: **jessa@bookslut.com**
Coverage: National
URL: **www.bookslut.com/blog**
Focus: Bookslut is a daily blog/magazine that features a constant supply of news, reviews, author interviews, commentary, insight and opinions.

Bloggermann
E-mail: **kolbermann@msnbc.com**
Coverage: National
URL: **www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6210240**
Focus: Bloggermann explores any big issues that catch the attention of the blogger, Keith Olbermann. Topics include general news, Politics, Religion, Culture and more.

Blogging About Incredible Blogs
E-mail: **leebow@gmail.com**
Coverage: National
URL: **www.leebow.com**
Focus: This blog focuses on blogs and technology. It's a great blog packed with info on the blogosphere.

Blogspotting
E-mail: **stephen_baker@businessweek.com**
Coverage: National
URL: **www.businessweek.com/the_thread/blogspotting**
Focus: Business & Finance > Business News & Media > Media Technology > Internet; Blogspotting follows the collision of business, the media and blogs. Great insight, great blogs. Definitely a must-read!

Booklust
E-mail: **gpstorms@rogers.com**
Coverage: National
URL: **storms.typepad.com**
Focus: Books, publishing, also does book reviews. Booklust is a blog devoted to books, often rounding up reviews of new books and discussing news surrounding authors, publishing companies and best-seller lists.

Books, Inq.
E-mail: **fwilson@phillynews.com**
Coverage: National
URL: **booksinq.blogspot.com**
Focus: Arts & Entertainment > Arts > Book Reviews Professional Services > Publishing Industry; Books, Inq. follows the world of a book review editor, as well as offering reviews and news about literature.

Buzz Machine
E-mail: **jeff@buzzmachine.com**
Coverage: National
URL: **www.buzzmachine.com**

Focus: Jeff Jarvis blogs about media and news at Buzzmachine.com. He is associate professor and director of the interactive journalism program at the City University of New York new Graduate School of Journalism. He is consulting editor of Daylife, a news startup. He writes a new media column for the *Guardian*.

Confessions of an Idiosyncratic Mind
E-mail: **sarah@weinmans.com**
Coverage: National
URL: **www.sarahweinman.com**
Focus: Arts & Entertainment > Arts > Book Reviews; Confessions of an Idiosyncratic Mind is a blog devoted to crime fiction novels, including reviews, news, author gossip and more. The blog has been mentioned in *The New York Times,* the *Los Angeles Times,* the *Boston Globe,* the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review,* the *Ottawa Citizen* and the *India Times Business-Standard. USA Today,* in a feature on literary Weblogs, proclaimed it "a respected resource for commentary on crime and mystery fiction."

CultureVulture
E-mail: **gamesblog@gmail.com**
Coverage: International
URL: **blogs.guardian.co.uk/culturevulture**
Focus: This blog offers a steady flow of gossip, music, movie, TV & radio and book reviews and general culture news from the *Guardian*'s Guide team.
emdashes
E-mail: **emdashes@gmail.com**
Coverage: National
URL: **emdashes.blogspot.com**
Focus: Emdashes is a blog focusing on a variety of topics including books, restaurants, journalism and other topics as they appear in the

magazine *The New Yorker.* The blog is not legally bound to *The New Yorker,* but uses its articles and information as a jumping-off point. The author is a former book critic for *The New Yorker.*

Entrepreneurs
E-mail: **entrepreneurs.guide@about.com**
Coverage: National
URL: **entrepreneurs.about.com**
Focus: Resources, tips, trends and links to help existing and aspiring entrepreneurs.
GalleyCat
E-mail: **galleycat@mediabistro.com**
Coverage: National
URL: **www.mediabistro.com/galleycat**
Focus: This blog looks at news in books and the publishing industry.

Girl in the Locker Room
Coverage: National
URL: **blogs.salon.com/0003945**
Focus: Girl in the Locker Room follows how women are making an impact all over the world. Packed with "girl talk" and book reviews this might be another great blog to go after.
Pop Candy
E-mail: **wmatheson@usatoday.com**
Coverage: National
URL: **www.usatoday.com/life/columnist/hipclicks/blog.htm**
Focus: Pop Candy is a daily Entertainment Weblog covering entertainment news, music, movies, television and celebrities.

Instapundit.com
E-mail: **pundit@instapundit.com**

Coverage: National
URL: **www.instapundit.com**
Focus: One of the highest rated blogs on the Net! This blog takes a look at the worlds of politics, international news, government issues and technology.

Internet Marketing Strategy
E-mail: **sally@falkowinc.com**
Coverage: National
URL: **falkow.blogsite.com/public/blog/81701**
Focus: Falkow offers news and views about Internet marketing strategy to look at how technology is influencing marketing and PR. Great blog, very good insights on Internet trends, marketing and future predictions.

Literary Saloon
E-mail: **blog@complete-review.com**
Coverage: National
URL: **www.complete-review.com/saloon**
Focus: This blog looks at current literature and publishing news.
Long Tail
Coverage: National
URL: **longtail.typepad.com/the_long_tail**
Focus: The Long Tail is a blog focusing on current events and issues in politics, government, and American culture from a writer at *Wired Magazine*.

MarketingVOX News
E-mail: **editorial@marketingvox.com**
Coverage: National
URL: **www.marketingvox.com**

Focus: MarketingVox follows Media news and trends to help those in the marketing industry.

Old Hag
E-mail: **theoldhag@oldhag.com**
Coverage: National
URL: **www.theoldhag.com**
Focus: Old Hag is a blog focusing on stream of conscious thoughts on books, media, pop culture and out of the ordinary news briefs. The bulk of the content is geared toward book news, reviews and discussion. The blog has been featured in the *Scotsman, Village Voice, New Yorker,* and *Washington Post*.

Book Blogs We Love

These blogs are packed with insights, news, and some critical opinions on what's hot and what's not in publishing.
Blogcritics: Books (**blogcritics.org/books**)
The Book Standard (**www.thebookstandard.com/bookstandard/index.jsp**)
Reading Matters (**kimbofo.typepad.com/readingmatters**)
MoorishGirl (**www.moorishgirl.com**)
POD-DY Mouth—she's no longer blogging but the posts are still there and still very funny (**girlondemand.blogspot.com**)
The Happy Booker (**thehappybooker.blogs.com/the_happy_booker**)
Book Fetish (**www.bookfetish.org**)
Booksquare (**www.booksquare.com**)
The Elegant Variation (**marksarvas.blogs.com/elegvar**)
Edward Champion's Return of the Reluctant (**www.edrants.com**)
Readers Read (**www.readersread.com**)
Blog of a Bookslut (**www.bookslut.com/blog**)

Beatrice (**www.beatrice.com**)
Buzz, Balls and Hype (**mjroseblog.typepad.com/buzz_balls_hype**)
Book Ninja (**www.bookninja.com**)
Maud Newton (**www.maudnewton.com/blog**)
Tales from the Reading Room (**litlove.wordpress.com**)
The Litblog Co-op (**lbc.typepad.com**)
Booktradeinfo (**forums.booktrade.info/booktrade.php?**)
Book Dwarf (**www.bookdwarf.com**)
Paper Cuts—*New York Times* (**papercuts.blogs.nytimes.com**)
Jacket Copy—*Los Angeles Times* (**latimesblogs.latimes.com/jacketcopy**)
USA Today Books (**www.usatoday.com/life/books/default.htm**)
Contemporary Literature (**contemporarylit.about.com/?r=94**)
Library Journal (**www.libraryjournal.com/community/Book+News%2FInterviews/47175.html?nid=3314**)
The Millions (**www.themillionsblog.com**)

Mom Blogs

Since Mommy blogs are such a huge influence online I thought I'd include them here in case your topic is Mom-worthy!
MomBlogNetwork (**www.momblognetwork.com**)
The Mom Blogs (**www.themomblogs.com**)
Parents Bloggers Network (**www.parentbloggers.com**)
CaféMom (**www.cafemom.com**)
WorkItMom (**www.workitmom.com**)
MamaSource (**www.mamasource.com**)
MomJunction (**www.momjunction.com**)
ClubMom (**www.clubmom.com**)
ModernMom (**www.modernmom.com**)

Publishing and Author Sites

Staying and keeping current is important. The following is a list of organizations, ezines and online groups that will help you stay dialed into the publishing world.

Writing & Publishing Organizations

- Publishers Marketing Association: A terrific organization to belong to whether you've published one book or 20. They also have their yearly "Publisher's University," which precedes the Book Expo America. A not-to-be-missed educational and networking program! Visit **www.pma-online.org**.
- Small Publishers Association of North America (SPAN): Helps publishers and authors stay in touch with the industry and keep on top of their individual marketing campaigns. Offering a terrific newsletter and several educational programs, a membership here, found at **www.spannet.org**, is always a great idea.
- Small Press Center: A great place for programs and events related to publishing. They always have a number of educational programs to choose from. Visit **www.smallpress.org**.
- National Writers Union: The only union representing writers in all genres, formats, and media working in the U.S. market. Visit **www.nwu.org**.
- The Authors Guild: Offers several benefits, including e-mail alerts and bulletins, seminars, and a contract service department. They can also help you with rights, e-rights, copyright issues, and taxes. Membership requires that you've published at least one book or three articles. Visit **www.authorsguild.org**.
- American Society of Journalists and Authors: Offers an annual conference, newsletter, writer referral service, professional resource lists, and online discussion forums. Visit **www.asja.org**.
- Romance Writers of America: Has a variety of benefits, including

a newsletter, local networking group, an annual conference, professional seminars, contests and awards. Visit **www.rwanational.org**.

- Sisters in Crime: Has a special focus on female mystery writers and offers a number of benefits to its members, including a newsletter, support of special interest groups, minorities, and new writers. Visit **www.sistersincrime.org**.
- Mystery Writers of America: Offers an annual meeting, national and chapter newsletters, discounts on magazines, books, car rentals, hotels, and insurance. They also offer a mentor program and annual literacy awards. Visit **www.mysterywriters.org**.

Online Newsletters and E-mail Newsgroups

- The Book Marketing Expert Newsletter: Our very own newsletter developed by Author Marketing Experts is packed with tips, marketing advice and insider info on all things publishing: **subscribe@amarketingexpert.com**.
- The Monkey C: Monkey Do Newsletter offers Web site design tips and optimization secrets to make the most of your Web site, drive traffic, and convert traffic into revenue. Subscribe at **www.monkeyCmedia.com**.
- Reader's Choice: Want to obtain a professional review for your book? This is not a place to post a review, chat or promote a Web site. It is a place to list current and forthcoming titles (books) in all genres of fiction and nonfiction available for review by online and print media. To subscribe, send an e-mail to: **ReviewersChoice-subscribe@yahoogroups.com**.
- John Kremer's Book Marketing Tip of the Week: This newsletter

really keeps me motivated to market, market, market. For your free subscription, send an e-mail to **johnkremer@bookmarket.com**.

- Writerswrite.com: Subscribe to this newsletter and stay abreast of what events are coming up in the world of writing.
- Publish-L: One of the most helpful discussion lists I belong to is at **www.publish-l.com**. Peruse the Web site and read (and adhere to) their guidelines. You won't regret becoming a member of this highly informative group of people. There's a wealth of knowledge here, and I can't tell you how much I've learned from these folks.
- WritersWeekly.com: A great site that offers a weekly newsletter. To subscribe, send an e-mail to **writemarkets-subscribe@egroups.com**.
- The Daily Grind: Looking for ways to successfully navigate your life as a writer? This biweekly newsletter provides insightful tips and news for writers. Send an e-mail to **CHDailyGrind-subscribe@topica.com**.
- Self Publishing: Interested in swapping ideas with other authors in the midst of promoting their books? Send an e-mail to **self-publishing-subscribe@yahoogroups.com**.
- Get Published Today! Need empowerment? Don't we all. Send an e-mail to **get-sublished-subscribe@yahoogroups.com**. This is a group dedicated to inspiring and empowering authors to keep them on track. They also share tips, tricks, and media contacts. Great site!
- The Idea Lady: A great newsletter packet with marketing tips published online every Tuesday. Subscribe to this newsletter by going to Cathy Stucker's site at **www.idealady.com** or by sending an e-mail to **ideasub@idealady.com**.

- Publisher's Lunch: A wealth of daily information on the publishing industry, new deals, pending deals, and, of course, a tad of industry gossip thrown in for good measure at **www.publisherslunch.com**.
- The Book Marketing Expert Newsletter: A biweekly e-zine packed with insider tips on book marketing and promotion. Each issue also comes with our exclusive media leads and magazine profiles. To subscribe, send a blank e-mail to **subscribe@amarketingexpert.com**.

Publishing Info, Trends, and Updates

- Publishing Central: Helps you stay current on all the publishing news. Here, you can learn about industry associations, current news, book trends, and statistics on book sales. Visit **www.publishingcentral.com**.
- WritersReaders: "The Publishing Insiders guide to book publishing." Visit: **www.writersreaders.com**.
- BookWire: Offers daily publishing news, literary events, and a wealth of industry links. Visit **www.bookwire.com**.
- Trend watching: A great newsletter that will help you stay on top of trends. The newsletter is free; just log onto the site at **www.trendwatching.com** to subscribe.
- Trendspotting, anyone? If you're looking to stay one step ahead of the game, the following links will help you do just that. Each focuses on forecasting and future trends—great if you're looking to anchor your book on the latest hot, new thing.

www.wfs.org
www.iftf.org
www.burrus.com
www.herman.net
www.faithpopcorn.com

Social Networking Bonanza

Remember when I said there were zillions of (niche) social networking sites out there? I wasn't kidding. Each of these sites is listed by category. Have fun!

Books

Americabookshelf.com: One of the largest book exchange clubs across the U.S.
Authornation.com: The online community of authors, writers, poets and their readers.
BooksConnect.com: A book sharing community site connecting readers, authors, publishers, librarians and booksellers.
BookCrossing.com: A community of users from over 130 countries who exchange books with each other at public places like cafes, parks etc.
Bookhopper.co.uk: Free community for U.K. residents to share used books with each other.
Bookins.com: Book sharing Web site that enables members to exchange used books with each other in real time.
BookMooch.com: An interesting concept where users can exchange books with others through points. Users gain points when they give books to others.
Booksalescout.com: Online community of users allowing them to sell books in the U.S.
Bookswim.com: Book borrowing service with free shipping for registered Web site.
ConnectViaBooks.com: A social networking site connecting book lovers and enabling them to discover other similar interests.
GoodReads.com: GoodReads is a book reader's community enabling members to review, share books they have been reading.
PaperBackSwap.com: Users can share books amongst each other and only pay for the delivery charges.

Pazap.com: A book trade engine for students to buy and sell old books.
Read It Swap It (**readitswapit.co.uk**): A free service that allows users to exchange books with others.
Revish.com: Another community for book lovers, letting them review their favorite books, group up, or simply tell the world what they're currently reading.
Shelfari.com: A popular social networking service for book lovers.
Socialbib.com: Book swapping network between students.
Virtual Book Review Network (**www.virtualbookreviewnetwork.com**): The online review network that *Wall Street Journal* top-selling authors use.

Business Networking & Professionals

AdvisorGarage.com: An online directory of advisers who are willing to assist budding entrepreneurs.
ArtBreak.com: An artist community for sharing and selling artwork.
Blogtronix.com: Promotes corporate social networking, enterprise 2.0 and wikis.
Commutal.com: An online sharing platform for businesses to create media rooms, participate in domestic groups and share event happenings with each other.
CompanyLoop.com: An online co-working community for global businesses.
ConnectBeam.com: Offers social networking specially designed for corporate users.
Decorati.com: An interior designer community enabling users to post items for sale and for exchange.
DoMyStuff.com: A good site for working professionals looking to find online assistants.
Doostang.com: An invite only career community for professionals.

Fast Pitch (**fastpitchnetworking.com**): A quickly growing business networking community in corporate world. Its service provides users with a one-stop shop network to market their business.
iKarma.com: A specialist in providing customer feedback for organizations and professionals.
ImageKind.com: A community and marketplace for professional artists.
Jambo.net: Lets you connect with your neighborhood friends.
Jigsaw.com: An online business card networking directory for users to establish contacts with each other. Each business card is listed with an e-mail ID and a contact number.
Konnects.com: Enables members to create their own professional networking communities.
Lawyrs.net: A professional social networking community for lawyers.
Linkedin.com: A professional social networking Web site for business users, one of the most popular such sites out there. Some aspects of it are free, but many are paid.
Mediabistro.com: For professionals in content or creative industry.
Pairup.com: Connects business travelers assisting them to travel together.
Ryze.com: A site for establishing new connections and growing networks. Connections for jobs, building career and making sales.
Spoke.com: Offers access to business network of over 40 million people worldwide.
VisiblePath.com: Helps organizations to integrate social networking into their existing tools.
Webcrossing.com: Provides a private label social network with personal spaces and user groups.
XING.com: A networking directory of business contacts powering relationships between business professionals allowing users to connect with each other.

Family

Amiglia.com: A family networking service enabling users to connect to family members by publishing and sharing family trees, photos etc.
CafeMom.com: A social networking site for mothers to connect and share thoughts with each other.
Cingo.com: Users connect with each other to organize their family life.
CommonGate.com: A social networking platform that enables users to create their own social network for their friends, family or organization.
Family 2.0 (**blogoscoped.com/family**): Helps you create your own family social network; you can add family members, send personalized e-mails and create event alerts.
Famiva.com: A premier social network to connect with family members and relatives in a secure environment.
Famster.com: A private secure social network for family members.
Geni.com: An exciting social networking site enabling members to create their family tree. Although it's a relatively new site, it has grown tremendously fast, and has hundreds of thousands of users.
Genoom.com: Creates a meeting place for its site users. They can create a family network by inviting their relatives and discover their past memories.
Kincafe.com: An ideal social network for families to connect with their beloved ones.
Kinzin.com: An online meeting place for families to share family events, photos, stories and recipes.
MayasMoM.com: A family networking site for parents.
Minti.com: A collaborative parenting site.
MomJunction.com: Allows mothers to find reliable answers to questions, create private spaces with friends and build communities.
MothersClick.com: Connects mothers in a neighborhood with one another and provides parenting advice to them.

Myfamily.com: An excellent way to connect with your family members.
OneGreatFamily.com: An online shared database with combined knowledge and data at a single place.
OurStory.com: Enables users to share stories of their families with others.
Parentography.com: A social network offering advice and advice for families.
TheFamilyPost.com: A sharing network for communication with family members.

Friends

43things.com: A tagging based social networking site. Users create accounts and list a number of goals or hopes and these are parsed based on similarity to goals of other users.
Amitize.com: A worldwide friendship network.
Asmallworld.net: A private online community designed for individuals who would like to connect, reconnect to share similar thoughts with each other.
Badoo.com: A dynamic multilingual social networking site with innovative photo and video features that allows its users worldwide to gain an instant mass audience and interact both locally and globally.
Bebo.com: A hugely popular site (especially in the U.K.), and similar in philosophy to MySpace. It allows users to communicate with their friends in multiple ways including blogging, sending messages and posting pictures.
Eons.com: An online gathering place for the elderly; most of the users are over the age of 50 years.
Facebook.com: A social networking phenomenon connecting people with their friends, family and other users with similar interests.
Faceparty.com: A U.K. based community social networking Web site.

It started for youngsters but has now risen to popularity among all age groups.
Flingr.com: Allows users to connect with all categories of friends—colleagues, college mates and school buddies.
Friendster.com: A popular global social network for finding new friends and developing friendships as well as searching old friends.
Hhi5.com: A prominent social networking service in India with over 40 million users. However, Hi5 has recently experienced an upsurge beyond India and has shown increasing popularity in the E.U. too.
Lovento.com: Allows you to discover news friends and also find information about latest events.
Multiply.com: A social networking Web site providing an easy way to share digital media which includes photos, videos and music.
Mycool.com: Enables members to find and share their interests with special groups.
MySpace.com: An interactive social networking Web site consisting of personal profiles, blogs, groups, photos, music and videos. It's currently the biggest social networking site out there, and while it might not be the most advanced one, the users seem to love its simplicity.
NetFriendships.com: A comprehensive social networking site enabling users to make new online friends and discover old ones.
Netlog (**en.netlog.com**): A social community of more than 20 million young Europeans.
Orkut.com: A social networking service owned by Google. It enables users to meet new friends and create communities.
Passado.com: Europe's No.1 reunion Web site connecting members with friends from school to workplace.
Piczoinc.com: Offers safe social networking environment to youngsters around the world. Piczo users can design their personal Web site with photos, videos, etc. and share it with their friends.

Plazes.com: A social networking Web site for connecting with local users.
Pownce.com: A mix of social networking and microblogging. It enables users to send messages, files, events and links with each other.
ProfileHeaven.com: A U.K.-based social networking site for teenagers.
Reunion.com: A leading online service for discovering old friends, classmates and family members.
Vox.com: A social blogging service where users share their ideas, photos, videos with family and friends.
Xanga.com: One of the biggest social networking platforms with features of sharing photos and videos.
XuQa.com: An online college social networking site with poker gaming features.

Hobbies & Interests

ActionProfiles.com: A social networking community for sports and action. The features of the Web site are profiles of users with photographs and videos, reviews of products and job discussion boards.
ARTslant.com: A community that provides a dynamic community experience by providing extensive listing of exhibitions, events and openings.
BeGreenNow.com: A community that aims to generate environmental awareness for users.
BeRecruited.com: A dedicated online community for sportpersons and coaches.
BottleTalk.com: A wine lover's community making it easy for members to share their drinking experiences.
CarGurus.com: An automobile community Web site enabling users to post car reviews, photos and share opinions.

Change.org: A nonprofit social networking Web site that connects like minded users and allows them to exchange information.
Changingthepresent.org: A nonprofit fund raising community with membership of over 400 nonprofits.
ChickAdvisor.com: A sharing community for women users.
CircleUp.com: One of the best community Web site connecting users to groups, clubs for knowledge sharing, information exchange.
Coastr.com: Connects beer lovers with each other.
ColShare.com: A community for people who have hobby of collecting items like coins, stamps, etc.
CoRank.com: A rating community for users to share interesting information on internet.
DailyStrength.org: A huge community of over 500 groups dealing with health issues and various medical challenges.
Dundoo.com: Enables users to create image collages out of social networking profile. A large amount of ads on the site somewhat diminishes the overall impression.
Flixster.com: A community for movie lovers.
FuelEmpire.com: Brings automobile enthusiasts together at one place.
GirlSense.com: A community for girls to promote their fashion designs and creations.
Greenvoice.com: An online networking platform for people who are conscious about the environment, who want to inform each other on environmental issues and create a difference.
iYomu.com: An adult social networking Web site and it allows users to search for site members who have similar interests or for business needs.
Motortopia.com: A community for automobile lovers. It consists of passionate lovers of bikes, planes, cars and boats, etc.
MyCatSpace.com: A community for lovers of cats passionate to share experiences of their cats with others.
MyDogSpace.com: Users can share their dog pictures, write blog

posts about dogs and communicate with other dog lovers, all in a very lovely community.
Uniteddogs.com: A social networking Web site for dog owners. The dog owners can create profiles of their dogs, create blogs and share their thoughts.
vSocial.com: A video based social networking platform allowing content owners, site operators to deliver the message online with video.

Media

Buzdeo.com: Provides secure video sharing service with friends and family.
Fotki.com: A photo sharing service enabling users to connect with friends.
Fotolog.com: A big online photo sharing community.

Music

Asoboo.com: A sharing network for cultural artists from around the world.
BandChemistry.com: A network for musicians uniting music bands all over.
BandWagon.co.uk: A music community Web site for music fans to manage their Web pages, profiles, videos and music.
CrackSpace.com: A common place for fans of hip-hop music.
Moob.com: A dedicated community of hip-hop fans.
MOG.com: An online community powering site members to discover music and music lovers.

Mobile

CrackBerry.com: A community dedicated to BlackBerry users.
Dodgeball.com: A New York–based service facilitating social interactions through mobile phones.
Friendstribe.com: A mobile phone–based social networking site.

GotZapp.com: A mobile social network for sharing images, audio and graphics with your friends' mobile phones.
Groovr.com: An ultimate mobile social networking site for staying connected with friends. It is compatible with iPhone.
Jaiku.com: Essentially a microblogging service with an SMS gateway, very similar to Twitter. They've recently been acquired by Google.
Loopt.com: A cool mobile-based friend locator Web site. It uses GPS to show its users the location of friends by updating maps on mobile handset.
Mixxer.com: Enables users to share content on their mobile with site members.
Mobango.com: A mobile community service powering users to search for user generated music content, videos and other data.
Mozes.com: Enables members to connect and socialize with each other through mobile phones.
Peepsnation.com: Allows users with similar interests to connect with each other on a location basis.
Rabble.com: A location-based social networking service for mobile phone users.
Socialight.com: A mobile-based social networking site where users share their travel experiences with other mobile users.
Wattpad.com: A mobile phone social networking platform allowing users to discover, read and share their stories with each others.

Shopping

3LUXE.com: A community generated product research site.
AgentB.com: A common place to find out the best shopping deals on internet.
Bringsome.com: A global goods delivery platform enabling community members to assist each other with access to best items from across the world.

Boxedup.com: Users add their favorite products to their list and share it with others.
CoWorkersAds.com: An online marketplace listing allowing site members to discover and sell items among coworkers community.
Iliketotallyloveit.com: A user generated marketplace where users submit cool products.
MyItThings.com: A user generated magazine for shopping.
MyStore.com: A social marketplace for buyers and sellers.
Productwiki.com: A common place for users to share information about consumer products.
RedFlagDeals.com: Canada's most popular shopping community that offers huge discounts to site users.
SaleGrab.com: A social shopping site for best sales and discount deals.
Shoppero (**en.shoppero.com**): Offers profit sharing to site users for writing product reviews.
SmashingDarling.com: A collaborative market place connecting buyers and sellers at one place.

Students

AlumWire.com: Assists college students, alumni with professional opportunities.
B4Class.com: A social network for high school and college students.
Campusbug.com: A college student social networking Web site.
CampusRank.com: Members select and rate their old school friends and group them into various categories.
College.com: An online community for college students.
CollegeMedium.com: A student classifieds Web site for buying and selling items, jobs search etc.
CollegeTonight.com: A great place to meet fellow college students and alumni.

DormItem.com: A local classifieds listings for schools in various cities.
Graduates.com: A social networking site assisting graduate school students to stay in touch post completion of course.
Half.com (**www.half.ebay.com/textbooks**): A leading student market place for buying and selling textbooks at discounted prices.
iHipo.com: An international community for college students and business professionals looking for networking opportunities.
LocalSchools.com: A networking site connecting students with local U.S. colleges and universities.
Pazap.com: A student trading site for buying and selling on-campus books with other students.
Quizilla.com: A social network for young teens.
RateMyProfessor.com: Connects students aspiring to study similar courses by assisting each other.
Student.com: A big online community for college students, high school students and teens with around 1,000,000 members.
Studentbid.com: A student marketplace for sales and purchase of items without any fees.
StudentSN.com: A social network allowing users to create home pages with contact information, personal information and photo albums.
Uloop.com: Allows students to trade textbooks, promote community events and do host of other activities.

Travel & Locals

Amicoz.com: Slightly different from conventional social networking sites; it doesn't have some of the common features found on socnets. It is dedicated to assist users in sharing their travel experiences, nothing more, nothing less.
Citizenbay.com: A user community for discovering local information.
CityTherapy.com: An easy way to find and share places of interest (restaurant, bars) in Europe.

CouchSurfing.com: A global travel network connecting travelers with local communities.
Fatdoor.com: A fun and an interactive way to connect with the folks from your neighborhood online.
Going.com: A fun way to interact with people locally.
iLoho.com: An online travel community with similarity to social bookmarking services like digg.
MatchActivity.com: Connects people on the basis of their activities. Users can find things to do and join people in their area.
Matador (**matadortravel.com**): A travel-based social network with an integrated blogging service.
myTripbook.com: A place for people who want to share their travel experiences through photos, videos and blogging with others.
OurFaves.com: A community of urban savvy folks who enjoy the Toronto city and find out cool places to hang out at.
Outside.in: A nice way to explore local communities to keep track with neighborhood news.
Rummble.com: Enables users to discover as well as share places of interest in your neighborhood.
TravBuddy.com: A cool site for sharing travel experiences, finding new travel friends or reading travel reviews of fellow friends.
Travellerspoint.com: An international meeting point for worldwide travelers.
TravelTogether.com: A travel-based social networking service enabling users to share travel plans, travel deals and experiences.
Tribe.net: One of the easiest ways to connect with people for finding a restaurant, a killer apartment, a gentle dentist or a hiking friend.
Triporama.com: Provides an easy way to plan and collaborate on group trips.
VibeAgent.com: A site about hotel reviews, travel meta-search and social networking.
WAYN.com: A social networking Web site uniting worldwide travelers.

WeExplore.net: Provides an online platform for volunteers and travelers from all over the globe.
Wikitravel.org: A dedicated project for creating a trusted, up-to-date travel guide. It has over 16,641 travel destination guides maintained and written by Wikitravellers from around the world.
Zoodango.com: Enables users to connect with urban professionals either online or face-to-face at local venues.

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Appendix A
Blog Worksheet

Blog Worksheet

This is a sample of worksheet I use in training sessions. It will help you break down your tasks, give you ideas on what to blog on and (hopefully) put you on a blogging schedule you'll feel you can keep!

Blogging ideas:

- Talk about current news
- Review other books or products
- Interview industry experts
- Talk about your views on current trends
- Address the elephant in the room.

My next three blog posts will be on:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Blog check list:

Is the title of my blog compelling enough?

Did I spell check my blog post?

Create "tags" for each post using keywords: **www.egmstrategy.com/ice/tag-generator.cfm**

Quick blogging tips:

Be sure and social bookmark each of your posts through sites like

Digg.com, Stumbleupon.com, Indianpad.com, Google bookmarks, and Delicious

Comment on other blog posts, it's a great way to do some virtual networking!

Blogs I'd like to network with (if you don't know specific blogs, list blog topics):

_____

_____

_____

Appendix B
Planning Worksheet

Planning Worksheet

Now it's time to start planning your online promotion. This is another worksheet I use in training sessions with our authors. This should help you define your goals and get you started on your to do list!

My markets are:

_____

_____

_____

Top three things I'm going to start on right away:

_____

_____

_____

To Do List:

- Start my blog (make sure it's hosted where my site is hosted)
- Start a social networking page
- Get a Twitter account
- Go to Technorati.com and identify blogs in my market I can network with

- Check my Web site stats
- Write a new press release every 90 days
- Update my media room

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C
Virtual Author Tour™ Touring Guide

Virtual Author Tour™ Touring Guide

If you're trying to keep all your virtual tour information straight here's a good log we've used that should help you keep track of everything.

Target Markets:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Top Ten Web Sites in Each Market

Market: _____

www._____

www._____

www._____

www._____

www._____

www._____

www._____

www._____

www._____

www._____

www._____

www._____

www._____

(repeat this for each market)

Virtual Author Tour™ Log:

Contact date: _____

Person contacted: _____

E-mail address:_____

URL _____

Status:

Responded book requested:_____

Book mailed on: _____

Responded interview requested: _____

No response: _____

Responded no interest:_____

Follow up dates/actions: _____

Follow up dates/actions: _____

Follow up dates/actions: _____

Follow up dates/actions: _____

We'd love your feedback.

Here's how to contact us:

Author Marketing Experts, Inc.
P.O. Box 421156
San Diego, CA 92142
www.amarketingexpert.com

To subscribe to our free newsletter, send an e-mail to subscribe@amarketingexpert.com

More books by Penny C. Sansevieri

NONFICTION

Red Hot Internet Publicity
(1st edition: Morgan James Publishing 2007)

From Book to Bestseller
(2nd edition: Morgan James Publishing, 2007)
(1st edition: PublishingGold.com, Inc., 2005)

Get Published Today
(Morgan James Publishing, 2007)

No More Rejections: Get Published Today!
(Infinity Publishing, 2002, 2003)

Get Published! An Author's Guide to the Online Publishing Revolution
(1st Books, 2001)

FICTION

Candlewood Lake
(iUniverse, 2005)

The Cliffhanger
(iUniverse, 2000)

For more information, contact info@amarketingexperts.com.

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