

Social Media For Authors

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What's the difference between social media and traditional marketing?

When you use social media to find people who are already talking about their needs, and you offer to help them solve that need, you are building the foundation for a trusting relationship. That's very different from spending thousands of dollars and using mass media to "blast" your message at millions of total strangers who probably couldn't care less about your product or service at that particular time.

Source: AK Stout <http://akstout18.amplify.com/2010/10/19/the-difference-between-social-media-and-traditionally-marketing-summed-up-in-2-sentences/>

What are the goals of social media?

1. Brand awareness (A brand is a promise of a certain level of quality and consistency.)

First, decide what you want people to think and feel about you as a brand. Are you a reliable authority on your subject? Are you someone who always offers fun things to do or gives away free things or who has the funniest books or who people can discuss their similar life stories with? When you decide that, everything you do in social media should be aimed at that goal. Brand awareness is not about direct sales. It's about increasing visibility and trust from readers.

2. Collect names for your newsletter

Your E-newsletter can also help brand awareness, but mostly, this is your way to get direct sales. Use your social media platforms to collect email addresses so that your fans will get your monthly newsletter in their inbox. More on newsletters later.

Create a Social Media Strategy

Facebook Fan Page

E-Newsletter

Twitter

Give away free stuff

You-



Your website is your hub. It's the place you send people when they ask about your books. Every social media tool that you use should be linked to on your website and vice versa. No matter what social media tools go out of fashion or are shut down, your website will always be there.

SEO

Blog

Digital
Book
Party

Blog Tour

Blog Carnival

You see, the only arrow pointing away from WEBSITE is SEO. The point here is increase SEO (Search Engine Optimization) which in turn will increase brand awareness.

Examples

This week, I am going to

- Write 1 blog post
- Write 2 Facebook posts
- Write 5 tweets on Twitter
- Start my newsletter for this month
- Answer questions on Facebook comments
- Reply to 3 people on Twitter
- Read comments on my new YouTube video

Monday

8pm-8:30: Write Facebook updates, answer questions

Tuesday

8pm-8:30: Write Twitter updates, have conversations

Wednesday

8pm-8:30: Make a blog post

Thursday

8pm-8:30: Start on this month's newsletter

Friday

8pm-9pm: Make YouTube video, read comments on previous

Saturday

11am-11:30: Check stats to see how well I did this week

Plan ahead! Keep a notebook full of ideas that you write in as you think of things so you don't have to take a lot of time out of your day to brainstorm. Keep a schedule of some kind, whether it's rigid with day and time or just some goals for the week—it's up to you.

Website

How to Create a Website

Buy a domain for a couple bucks from a service like godaddy.com or 1and1.com.

Pay the service about \$50 per year for hosting.

Either hire a designer to create the website for you or create it yourself using software like DreamWeaver or Share-Point.

Alternatively, if you don't want a domain name, you can get a free website off of services like freewebs.com or you can set a blogger.com page to function like a website rather than a blog. But remember, the URL won't look as nice as www.yourbook.com.

Home Page

Include images of your books and a *short* introduction to this website—who you are, what you write and what people can expect to find on this website. Also include a link to buy the book, your email address, and any recent news.

Bio Page/About the Author

This can be a more extended bio with links to any online articles you've written or social media links. Remember, the goal here is to boost your reputation.

Links

Link to anyone who has relevant information for your audience, but not direct competition. Linking is a great way to boost SEO.

Events

List any live appearances with date, place, time, and other details about each event.

Press Kit

For reviewers: a press release, interviews, hi-res photos of covers and author picture, blurbs, the topics you can discuss, short description of each book, short author bio.

Blog (can be a part of the website or hosted elsewhere and simply linked here)

Free Excerpt of Your Book

Book Pages

(if you have more than one book or have more to say than the short description)

Newsletter

Reasons to use an outside service

It automatically deletes emails on your list that are no longer active. This is good because if you keep getting emails bounce back, you could be black-listed and not even know it. That means your emails will never be sent from any email address from that computer. It allows you to send one email to thousands of people, unlike many email clients like Yahoo and Gmail.

Examples of services:
Constant Contact
iContact
Mail Chimp
Campaigner
What Counts

Why a Newsletter?

Despite email being an older system than social media, it's still the most direct digital marketing tool, with higher click-through rates. Unpublished writers can certainly have a newsletter, but it's most useful for published authors because they will see the highest sales spikes after sending out a newsletter announcing a new book or discount.

Frequency

Send one out every 4-6 weeks, depending on how much you have to say. Don't let them get too sprawling, but don't send one more than every month because readers might view it as spammy and unsubscribe.

What to say

Offer a discount on your book or giveaway/contest (set this up with your publisher). Announce upcoming appearances. Give a free excerpt. Recent exciting news. Recent interviews or reviews. Include links to your blog, website, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, etc.

Formatting

Don't do HTML emails with graphics if you want to make it through the spam filters. Make it organized with headings. Don't try to stuff it with information. Highlight just one thing per section. Even better, just highlight one thing per newsletter.

How to get contacts

Put a subscribe to mailing list link on your website, blog, and Facebook Fan Page. Ask nicely for people to subscribe and promise them discounts and giveaways, or whatever you think is the best incentive to sign up.

Facebook

Myths

1. Facebook will eliminate my privacy — only if you're posting things that you don't want people to read!
2. Facebook takes up too much time — only if you let it! Don't play Farmville and stalk your friends all day long.
Get on, get off.

What can Facebook do for me?

It can make your Fan Page go viral. It allows fans to comment on things you put on there, and things others have put up. It allows discussion.

Create

The reason Fan Pages are better than Profile Pages are because you can create any tabs you want. Dedicate one to your books, put in a poll, start discussions. Most important is your Welcome tab, which you can create by adding a FBML app and calling it Welcome. Make sure in your settings that your Fan Page is set up to use this page as the landing page for all non-fans. You also only have a limited number of friends on your profile page.

Ads

<http://www.facebook.com/ads/create/>

If you're going to spend money on advertising, Facebook is the cheapest and twice as effective as other online advertising methods.

Useful Links

[Facebook.com/badges](http://facebook.com/badges)

[Facebook.com/share](http://facebook.com/share)

Facebook Terminology

Profile Page

When you sign up for Facebook, you automatically get a profile page. This is a page that is about you as a person. Other people can click ADD AS FRIEND, and the people you accept as your friend will be called your “Facebook Friends.” Some people use this profile page as their marketing page, but I suggest you only accept friends who you actually know. On this page, you can add photos, favorite things, etc. **BUT YOU DON’T HAVE TO.** You have to use your name because FB will kick you off if you use a fake name, but you don’t have to add anything you don’t want to. So in that way, you don’t have to worry about your personal information being out there. You don’t even need a photo.

Fan Page

This is the page for marketing. You can create as many custom tabs (sub-pages) as you want. People will be able to click the LIKE button and become your fan. You do not have to confirm them like you have to accept friends to your profile page. You do not have to create a new account or login to create a fan page. You log in with the account you already created and can create as many Fan Pages as you want. They are also referred to as Official Pages because they must be owned by the person who the page is about. This page is not about you as a person but about you as a brand. Include things about your books and anything you’ve decided to include to promote that image of yourself that you chose when you were planning your social media goal.

Community Page

Community pages look a little like Fan Pages because they have a LIKE button on top. But the difference is that they are automatically generated based on people adding their favorites on their profile pages. The content includes excerpts off Wikipedia and posts that people have made referencing this topic. You can claim the page as your own, but then it’s up to you to keep it up. If you don’t claim it, it will continue to be updated automatically based on any changes to Wikipedia and the latest profile posts throughout Facebook. I wouldn’t be too concerned about these pages.

Group

This is something else you don’t have to worry about, but you should be aware they exist so you don’t confuse them with Fan Pages. A Group is like a Fan Page except it is created by people who do not represent the person the group is about. If you are a fan of Will Smith, you can create a Group about Will Smith, but you can not create a Fan Page for Will Smith because you are not Will Smith or his publicist. These Groups are often used for silly things like “I hate purple Skittles” rather than as serious marketing endeavors. You’ll know a group when you see it because instead of LIKE at the top, it will say JOIN.

Facebook Fan Pages

To create a Fan Page go to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php>
In the Official Page box, choose Local Business, Brand/Product/Organization, or Artist/Band/Public Figure. (Unless you're a restaurant or store with an actual location, you're not a local business)
Choose a name that is different from your profile page. If your profile is called Jaime Nelson, maybe your Fan Page is called Jaime Nelson Books. Check the box and hit Create Official Page.
Fill out info boxes, add a photo, and fill in the little description box under the photo. To make changes, click "Edit Page" under the photo. Use the left sidebar to navigate. The "Applications" option will give you a list of all your tabs. To edit a tab, click "Go to Application" under that tab. To create a new tab, click "browse more applications" at the bottom. When you find an application you like, click on it to go to its page. Click on "Add to my page" under the photo and choose your page. Your favorite application to add is called FBML because it is a blank slate that you can add anything into: text, pictures, tables, etc.

Gaining Fans

1. Link your Facebook Fan Page on your website, blog, etc.
2. Hide material from non-fans. You can have a message display "If you can't see anything on this page, click the "Like" button!"
3. Tag other people and other Fan Pages on your wall by using the @ symbol. For example, if you write "The @New York Times just wrote a review of my book!" then everyone who "likes" the New York Times Fan Page will be able to read this and trace it back to your Fan Page (you must "like" the New York Times Fan Page in order to tag them).
4. Click the "suggest to friends" button under your logo.
5. Most of all, supply good content, be creative, be consistent, interact with your fans as much as possible, offer free and fun things.

Vanity URL

facebook.com/username

After you get 25+ fans, you can have a shorter, easy to remember URL like facebook.com/werenotjohn rather than facebook.com/pages/werenotjohn/43584908546

Liking a Post

Clicking the LIKE button on top of the page makes you a fan of the page, but you can also click the little LIKE button under each post on the wall. The more times people have clicked LIKE on a post, the more likely that post will show up on the front page of Facebook (feed) for your fans.

Twitter

Don't

Post a link with no explanation.

Post boring things: Nobody wants to hear about the weather or your dinner!

Merely retweet what everyone else says.

Do

Be original.

Show off your personality.

Use mysterious or controversial intros to your links.

Be relevant. Use hashtags and follow trending topics.

Content

Always post a link.

Be original: give followers a glimpse into the writing process, hold a contest, ask questions, jokes, trivia, links, interviews, reviews, excerpts, photos, videos...be creative!

Getting Followers

Re-tweet what others are saying by clicking the re-tweet button next to a post that you like.

Follow as many people related to your audience as possible. If it annoys you to have 700 people in your stream on your homepage, you can create Twitter lists to narrow your focus of the people you want to follow.

Use hashtags. These are your keywords. You can use search.twitter.com or hashtag.org to search for the hashtag you want to use to see if other people are using it. If they are, there are probably people following it, too. Two good examples: **Benjamin kidnapped by aliens - free excerpt of my book:** www.htl.com/78906 #aliens #scifi #books or #Free #excerpt of my #scifi #book - Ben kidnapped by #aliens ! www.htl.com/78906

Other Tools

Free tools like **TweetDeck.com** and **Hootsuite.com** will make your life easier when it comes to tweeting, following people on Twitter, and even seeing how many people are following your links. These tools are also hooked up to other tools like Facebook and LinkedIn, but they are best for Twitter.

The Rule of 3

Post original material, interact, monitor—Make sure you schedule time for each of these.

Blog

Frequency

It doesn't matter how often you decide to post, as long as you are consistent. If you're going to post once a month, then make sure you post once a month. If you're going to post twice a day, make sure you post twice a day. People want to know what to expect and trust you to be reliable.

Variety

- Post excerpts from your book, but don't give your whole book away
 - Include good content that got left on the cutting room floor when your book was edited
 - Interview people in your field
 - Answer questions from your readers on the blog (without corrupting privacy barriers)
 - Post any news or information related to your field
 - Host a contest or give-away
 - Have a weekly gimmick like "Question Friday" where you ask your readers to post answers to questions in the comments, then you answer them
 - Your opinion on something related to your field
 - An insight into the writing/publishing world
 - Any events that you will be or have attended
- Include a photo in every post, even if it's just a free stock photo from www.sxc.hu (hint (PC): right-click the picture you want, click Properties, copy the Address (URL), and instead of inserting picture from file, insert picture from URL and paste in this URL.

Lenth

300-500 words is perfect length.

Blog Clients			
Blog Client	Usability	Freedom of Design	Communi-ty
Blogger	Very Easy	Fair	Little
WordPress	Moderate	Great	Little
LiveJournal	Fairly Easy	Very Little	Lots
TypePad	Difficult	Fair	Little

Blog extras

Blog Tour

A blog tour is a digital book tour—a tour across the web from the comfort of your own home. Like a regular tour, there are dates and locations (URLs) that you will “appear” in some fashion, be it by writing an article, answering questions from readers, or giving an excerpt from your book.

Find blogs with a topic that relates to you and send them a pitch letter.

Don’t forget: If they say yes, send them a JPEG of your cover and announce this tour stop on your website.

Blog Carnival

It’s like a digital magazine comprised of links to other people’s blog posts.

Joining a Carnival

Find a carnival already in action on www.blogcarnival.com and submit a blog post that you made to the appropriate carnival and hope that they choose your post for one of the posts they display at this month’s carnival.

Hosting a Carnival

Create a carnival on [blogcarnival](http://blogcarnival.com) and wait for the submissions to come in. It should be related to your blog. Then pick your favorite submissions and post links to them in one post on your blog dedicated to this month’s carnival.

Digital Book Launch Party

Just like a live book tour, you can have a big event online to celebrate the release of your book. First you will need a place to post all the information about your tour: your blog, Facebook Fan Page, your website. It might be all three.

Ideas that other authors have used:

- Live video chat: Blogtalkradio allows you to be on video answering questions while your fans are typing to you in the attached chat box.
- A printable cut-out game (cards, board, etc.) based on the adventure in the book
- Printable posters, cards, activity book, etc. to include in a gift bag
- A free download of the e-book or excerpt
- An audio or video of the author reading from the book
- Live Twitter chat in Q&A form
- Live Twitter scavenger hunt (using clues to locations of thing online) — don’t forget to offer prizes to winners
- Live webinar teaching something the book is based on

Video (YouTube)

Things to use video for

- A book trailer. This is essentially a movie trailer, but for your book. There are many ways to go about it. One way is to get actors and shoot it like a movie trailer such as with **Guillermo Del Toro's book The Strain**. Or use stock footage or photos like **Guitar World**.
- Interviews. If your book was compiled from interviewing people, you can use any video that you took as a special feature.
- Welcome. Maybe you want to have a short clip on the homepage of your website welcoming your readers and telling people a little about your book and your site. Don't make it much longer than a minute though—you want them to actually get into the site and look around.
- Instructional. Is your book a how-to or self-help? Show the readers how to do one of the things from the book. Interact with the text.

Things you will need

- A video camera or webcam (most laptops these days come with a webcam)
- Video editing software. I like Sony Vegas, but whatever floats your boat. Your computer probably comes with one like Windows MovieMaker, for example.
- A YouTube account. Or if not YouTube, then your own server, Facebook, or other video site like Vimeo.

Where to put your video

- Your website
- Your Facebook Fan Page (you can upload it directly to Facebook or link to it on YouTube. You can also embed it on one of your tabs by using FBML coding.
- Your blog

Tips: Use “Video” at the end of your video title. Use very specific key word phrases. Have a video description of 200 or more words to increase SEO. Use Tubemogul if you want to post on many video sites with just one click.

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

SEO is how you rank on Google. When someone makes a search, does your website/blog/etc. show up on the first page of the searches or the 38th page? There are some things you can do to make your website float to the top.

Do

Provide good content. Content is king!

Frequently updated pages. If your blog is a part of your website, your website will have good SEO because the blog is constantly changing whereas your website might be pretty static.

Use long, specific keyword phrases like “How to navigate Pacific Ocean” rather than “Navigation” “Pacific” and “Ocean”

Buy Google Key Terms

Link to relevant sites, and ask them to link to you.

The ultimate goal is to be popular, and Google judges your popularity by how many people are linking to you (and how many people are returning to your page).

Don't

Keyword stuffing. If you want your website to be the #1 ranked site for Billy Joel, you may think it helps to use Billy Joel in every sentence on your website, but Google is smart and can see that you're just doing this to improve your ranking. It will penalize you by dropping your ranking even lower.

Using graphics instead of text. Google can't read the words in your image. Same with flash videos. Don't use Flash if it doesn't have straight text! And especially don't use a flash video page to introduce your website.

Dead links. One dead link (a link that doesn't go anywhere or goes to an error page) and Google will drop your rank like a rock.

Useful Links

Spirit Guide 3.0, my social media blog for authors

<http://socialmediaforauthors.wordpress.com>

Mashable, the best social media blog out there

<http://mashable.com/>

Convince & Convert <http://www.convinceandconvert.com/>

Daily SEO Tip <http://dailyseotip.com/>

Music 3.0, social media for musicians, but it can apply to authors, too

<http://music3point0.blogspot.com/>

Social Media Examiner <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/>

Social Media Today <http://socialmediatoday.com/>

The Chris Voss Show (Social Media Leader) <http://thechrivossshow.com/>