



## Social Media Marketing—New Rules for Added Revenue

In the old days of promotions—before the Internet came along and changed the way we do pretty much everything—you had two options for garnering attention for your product or service: advertisements and the media. But now you have the World Wide Web as your oyster. And a new paradigm, with terms like “Twitter,” “friending,” “LinkedIn,” “Facebook,” and “tweet” as the new rulers of this Internet realm. Publish interesting content in the social media marketing format, and you can potentially have thousands—millions—of people read it and take action. Furthermore, a virtual author book tour can give you exposure to literally millions of potential book buyers. Note that we covered creating a powerful Web site and foundational information on tapping into the Net in chapter twelve, “Using the Web to Rally ‘Buzz’ and Business.” In this chapter, we’ll discuss how you can further unleash the power of the Internet to sell books.

### OVERVIEW

Web 2.0 and social media—the new, live Web—are here to stay. It’s no longer adequate to write your book, put up your Web site, and expect people to find you. You need to maximize your Web site’s value through interactivity, sharing, and building relationships. Although some people are intimidated by the newness of “viral marketing,” they needn’t be. Leveraging social media marketing to build your platform (see chapter four, “Scoping Out a Marketable Subject,” for more information) and to make yourself stand out from the crowd is not that difficult.

So what exactly is “social media”? It is often described as the online practice wherein people use technology to talk, participate, network, and bookmark. Social media sites blogs, microblogs, podcasts, videocasts, forums,

wikis, or some kind of content community are included under this umbrella. It's a contact sport. Unlike traditional media, which more or less is a one-way form of communication, social media promotes discussion, feedback, voting, and otherwise sharing of information. It also enables participants to stay connected with other people and resources.

Incidentally, "Web 2.0" doesn't really mean there is a different Internet than there was before. The Internet superhighway is the same, but there are more vehicles traveling on it now, including communities that interact together (that is, social media). So the terms are closely related and often lumped together; we'll simply refer to social media from here on in.

People are jumping on the bandwagon at incredibly high rates: Nearly half of all adult Internet users have created content online. And some studies show that 67 percent of businesses say their best source of advice for products and services are their consumers (who communicate with them via social media). Can you afford not to ride this technological wave of the future?

Are there pitfalls to this new technology? Absolutely! Losing track of time is the biggest. You start chatting on Twitter about your new book, and the next thing you know an hour or more has slipped by and you are clicking on links that have nothing to do with promoting yourself. (Some experts recommend spending twenty minutes or so in the morning and another twenty minutes in the late afternoon to respond to the day's activities.) Another problem is failing to define your purpose for using social media, and not making a plan before you get started.

Don't think you have to do anything and everything in terms of social media. New social media channels are cropping up on a seemingly daily basis; don't be like the proverbial child trying to power through an entire bag of Halloween candy in one day. Pick two or three things that seem most applicable for you, and work at them consistently. Because we are limited to just a chapter here, we've covered what we believe are the most relevant for today's authors. (And by the time this book reaches publication, the best and brightest user-generated content sites will have likely changed again!)

## **SOCIAL NETWORKS**

The core of social network marketing is relationship development. Sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, and Twitter allow you to find and link to

other people. Once you have connected, you can keep that person's contact information, interests, posts, and so forth up-to-date. These sites have re-connected people with friends, relatives, and associates they haven't been in touch with for years. And there are no limitations on who you can develop direct relationships with, including CEOs of large corporations, politicians, and celebrities. It's making the world a smaller place than ever before. There are no boundaries or limitations on who you can meet.

MySpace, once a powerhouse in the big four, has been losing market share dramatically. From July to August 2009, they lost more than 4 million U.S. visitors. September to October saw them drop another 5 million. Although they likely won't disappear altogether, they are fading fast in relevancy, thus we don't cover them here.

## Facebook

This giant, which is similar to MySpace, serves 300 million members across the world (as of September 2009), with MySpace dropping behind as its rate of new members remains flat. Because more businesses are joining Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)), and it seems better suited to professional networking, we've limited our discussion here to Facebook.

Your profile is where it all begins. Basically, your profile is the landing page for your Facebook account. It's your calling card. And it needs to be *you*. Not your book. Not your business. People want to "friend" a person, not an entity. ("Friending," by the way, is what it is called when you connect directly with people.) Follow the steps online to fill in your personal and professional information. Add a professional-looking photograph of yourself.

Be very careful with what you put in your profile. Go ahead and include your personal hobbies and interests, but don't include anything you would not be comfortable sharing with a stranger on the street. (Did you know information on your Facebook account can be considered evidence in a court of law?!)

It's time to start building your friend base. Does the number of friends you have matter? Obviously, the more friends you have, the larger your networking pool. But rather than obsessing over the *number* of friends you have, concentrate on building a network of *high-quality* friends. Start by using the tools Facebook offers when you first sign up for an account. It will run

through your e-mail address book to find out who is already on Facebook. You'll probably also see some pending requests from people you know who have already sent you a friend request.

When you meet prospects or start working with clients, look for them on Facebook and add them as friends. Create a vanity Facebook URL to make it easy for people to find you. Incidentally, Sue's is [www.facebook.com/suecollier](http://www.facebook.com/suecollier). Feel free to send a friend request!

Should you have a policy for friending on Facebook? Some people only accept those who they have met face-to-face. That's fine if you are using Facebook strictly for personal reasons. But if you are using it for business networking, we recommend a more open policy. You may want to draw the line on people who don't bother to include a photo of themselves. If anyone does anything inappropriate or sends you spam, you can simply "unfriend" them with a click of the mouse. (Incidentally, they will not be notified if this happens.)

Now you are ready to start adding status updates. Facebook asks you "What's on your mind?" Answer that question with interesting, relevant content your connections will find valuable. Tell them about an interesting project you are working on. Offer advice about something relevant to your field. Provide information about an event you are holding. List your book signings, upcoming podcasts, and so forth. Don't say you are "Watching the nightly news." Instead, mention a compelling story on the news and provide a link. Give them something of value.

Facebook groups are a great way to promote your book. You can join a group that is already in existence—enter keywords in the Facebook search box to find those that are relevant—but starting your own is probably a better idea. Simply click the Join Group button of a group that interests you, then post an intro on the group's wall and add a photo of your book cover to the photo section. Check out the discussion board for any conversations to which you can contribute and type away. Just remember, as usual, provide useful information; don't just blatantly blather on about your book.

If you start your own group, make sure it is classified as "open" so anyone can join, not just your friends. Write a brief description of the group. Then invite people to join the group by clicking on the appropriate item in the list on the right side of the page. Again, remember that groups are for discussion and sharing of information; don't overtly plug your book. (That's

better suited for a “page,” which is covered in the next section.) The more valuable content your group provides, the more likely you are to interest members. Make sure you promote your book on your Web site and wherever else might be appropriate.

Facebook business pages are different from groups in that they are specifically designed for businesses to brand themselves. Not only is there no limit on how many you can have, but they are also more customizable than groups pages. There is also an option for an “events” page, which allows you to promote or celebrate any kind of event—including those that are virtual. Facebook also allows indexing of events, which means search engine optimization (SEO) advantages for you. There is no limit on how many people can be a fan of your page, whereas for a personal account there is a maximum of five thousand. You can e-mail fans directly, too.

What about the Facebook ads that pop up on the right of your page? Facebook reaches millions of people, right? So are the ads worth it? Opinions are mixed. Ads can be used to reach a specific niche market, which can be effective if you have a solid knowledge of Internet marketing. Perhaps in the future advertising this way will be worthwhile for everyone, but for now, use your profile, group, and pages to build your network.

## LinkedIn

LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)) is an interconnected network of experienced professionals from around the world, representing more than 48 million members from 170 industries and 200 countries (as of October 2009). This professional contact database enables you to find, be introduced to, and communicate with professionals who can help you accomplish your goals. A bit more “suit and tie” than Facebook and most of the other popular social networking sites, it’s all about business. It is your online résumé—and so much more. LinkedIn offers free and paid accounts, but you don’t need the latter to take full advantage of what this site has to offer.

Essentially, LinkedIn’s value lies in “the Kevin Bacon effect.” This popular trivia game is based on the premise that everyone on this planet is connected within six contacts or degrees of separation. This fascinating idea remains unproven but it always seems to work—whether for the actor himself or for the average Joe (or Jill). Once you’ve built your network,

chances are someone in your primary connections knows someone who knows someone who can provide information or help you need. If you're an author looking for a book endorsement, for instance, you will have much more chance of success reaching the CEO of a major corporation via a trusted network of contacts than through the traditional channels of trying to get past a gatekeeper.

After you set up your profile—again, keeping it professional and honest—and add a nice head shot, you are only partially done. Write your summary and descriptions keeping your reader in mind. Take care to use keywords that will make it easy to search for you. Add recommendations from colleagues. Also, make sure your profile is public if you intend to use it for networking. Spend a little more time on the profile for LinkedIn because there are so many features that make this profile very unique, such as the ability to add your blog streams, books you are currently reading, and much more.

Next, you need to start building your network. And unlike Internet search engines, which tend to be ineffective at searching for people, this is something at which LinkedIn excels.

There are likely many LinkedIn members in your own database; find them first. Why, you may ask, do I need to connect with these people on LinkedIn if I already have their e-mail addresses? But you probably also have limited information about these people. You may be able to contact them, but did you know he or she used to work for a specific Fortune 500 company? Or perhaps you have a friend with a background in publishing you never knew about. You don't really know people as well as you think you do.

In addition, people change jobs frequently these days and it's easy to lose touch—particularly if they change e-mail addresses. Once you're connected on LinkedIn, you don't have to keep track of their contact information; they'll keep it up-to-date themselves on their profile. What a time-saver, not to have to keep track of hundreds of people in your database!

Add former bosses and colleagues. Sue reconnected with a favorite boss from her first job in publishing right out of college. They hadn't spoken or been in touch in some twenty years, and he is now serving as a valuable mentor to her. Look for clients, past and present, who are on LinkedIn. You might also search out those with whom you have a "virtual" relationship—bloggers, forum buddies, and so forth.

“Answers” is a LinkedIn feature that enables you to ask questions to the entire community. This is a great way to conduct market research or find answers to questions such as “Where can I find a good copyright attorney?” If you can answer questions that are posted, this is an excellent way to establish credibility and position yourself as *the* expert and become well-known very quickly in your niche market.

Join and participate in LinkedIn groups to connect with like-minded professionals. Membership in a group affords users the following three benefits: you have access to the profiles of the other members of your group, you can directly contact the other members of your group for free (inmail is usually a function of paid membership only), and you can display your group on your profile page as a “digital bumper sticker.” Find groups through LinkedIn’s search function using keywords appropriate for your industry or book’s genre.

Or create your own group like Joe Gregory, co-author of *The Wealthy Author* and owner of Lean Market Press, did. He hosts a lively discussion group entitled “The Wealthy Author” on LinkedIn that has attracted some heavyweights in publishing, both traditional and independents.

## Twitter

Wikipedia defines Twitter as “a free social networking and microblogging Web site that allows its users to send and read other users’ updates (otherwise known as tweets), which are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length.” Notice that is *characters*, not words; your tweets must be succinct.

At first glance, Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)) looks fast-paced, time-consuming, and confusing—and yes, it can be all of those things. But it can also be a highly valuable element in your book-marketing tool chest. According to Mashable (“the world’s largest blog focused exclusively on Web 2.0 and social media news”), not only is Twitter’s popularity skyrocketing to epic proportions—it grew 422 percent in 2008 and a staggering 1,382 percent in early 2009—but it can be a highly effective way to connect with your target market. It’s also a great way to conduct market research and receive feedback on your book, as well as

an excellent tool for interacting with readers and potential readers. Get started the same way you did for Facebook and LinkedIn: Set up your profile page. Include a head shot, bio, design choice, URL, and a brief description. Once you're set up, start following people. Cathy Fraser, of Backcountry Business Solutions, likes the Twitter directory, Twellow. This type of site can introduce you to Twitter users who have the same interests as yours.

You can also find people you respect in your industry (search their names using Twitter's search function) and see who they follow. Watch conversations, and follow the interesting people you see there. Use Twitter Grader (<http://twitter.grader.com>), which will rate your reach and authority on Twitter. Then it will suggest people for you to follow, based on keywords in your bio and your location.

When new people follow you, follow them back. Engage them by asking a question about their business. If you don't know something about a topic, ask. Participate in conversations.

Use "hashtags" to add additional context and metadata (information about a particular item's content) to your tweets. A hashtag is much like adding a metatag keyword to your Web site. But unlike a Web site, where your keywords are kept behind the scenes, a hashtag is actually part of your tweet. Simply put a # symbol before the word: #selfpublishing, for instance. Go to [www.hashtags.org](http://www.hashtags.org) for more information or to have your personal hashtags tracked.

Avoid feeling overwhelmed by adopting a *quality* rather than a *quantity* strategy. And remember that it's a stream of conversations—not a publication. You don't have to participate twenty-four/seven for fear you will miss something. By dipping in and out of it, and by not feeling compelled to follow every tweet ... the more you follow, the more you'll have the chance to stumble across something interesting by dipping in and out. Plus you can follow a few thousand people but mark only your favorites.

TweetDeck ([www.tweetdeck.com](http://www.tweetdeck.com)) is a desktop application that simplifies the Twitter process; Twitter reader lets you categorize your posts and makes it easier to follow the tweets of people you don't want to miss. Sue (@SueCollier, by the way) uses one column for friends and colleagues she knows well, one column for the entire Twitter stream

of updates, one column for tweets where she is mentioned, and one for direct (private) messages. She also uses columns to search specific keywords, such as “self-publishing.” This enables her to read tweets from others in the self-publishing biz.

Don’t spam! And do not continually post the same message over and over. These are two main reasons you will be “unfollowed.” Instead, post valuable updates. Judy Cullins, who helps pros brand their businesses with a book, suggests making a list of URLs for free reports, e-books, teleseminars, and resources such as her monthly e-zine. In front of each, write a few benefits and name the freebie. She puts them in a file entitled “tweets to freebie.” She also recommends setting up a file for quotes from your book to stimulate curiosity.

How many times a day should you tweet? Experts suggest three to ten times per day. You’ll also want to allow time for retweeting, commenting, and following others. “Retweeted” means that one of your followers reposts your tweet to their followers. This is a useful way of reaching a larger audience in your Twittersphere. Retweeted posts are generally indicated by adding “RT @username” in front of the original tweet. Schedule this regularly as part of your daily routine.

“I got an assignment from an editor who contacted me after reading one of my status updates on LinkedIn,” says one member of the American Society of Journalists and Authors. Another followed an editor at a parenting magazine via Twitter, and she followed the writer back. The next time she pitched the editor, she got an assignment—this, after two years of unsuccessful querying and making no headway. Short Twitter exchanges have opened the door to information and acquaintances writers would not have had access to by sending an e-mail or making a cold call.

Need more proof of return-on-investment on Twitter? Dave Mathison, who spoke at IBPA’s Publishing University in 2009, related how he sold more than five thousand books to a foundation as a result of a connection he made on Twitter. A woman expressed interest in his book via tweet, and Mathison subsequently friended her on Facebook, where they could have a more detailed conversation. She invited him to a conference that was happening just two days later, where they

came to a handshake agreement. From start to finish, the deal took just eleven days.

## **AVOIDING MISTAKES IN YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PLAN**

Public relations experts Pam Lontos and Maurice Ramirez, Ph.D., list the following as the top five mistakes people make when engaging a social media marketing plan:

1. *Having more than one face on the Internet.* It's important to keep in mind that the purpose of social media is not much different than traditional networking. But instead of passing out as many business cards as you can at a networking event, you want to pass along parts of your image across the Web. And you want to make sure the “parts” are consistent. Wherever anyone finds parts of you on the Internet, they should see a “whole” you.

2. *Collecting friends just for the sake of collecting them.* Sure, there are people out there with twenty-five thousand Twitter followers, but what are they doing with them? When you link up with a contact, it should be to build a relationship and exchange information—not just increase random numbers. Make sure that's what you are doing with the “friends” with whom you connect.

3. *Putting out the wrong message.* Don't post mundane tidbits about yourself. People are probably not all that interested in what you had for breakfast—unless it is a recipe from your latest cookbook. Make sure you post items that are relevant to you and consistent with your image.

4. *Posting inappropriate information.* Think before posting. Putting up pictures, for example, you wouldn't be comfortable showing your own parents is probably not a good idea. It's fine to post your vacation pictures on Facebook, for instance, but perhaps not of you at a night club in a suggestive pose. Anything posted on the Internet can ultimately be seen by the public.

5. *Assuming it is better to have your message in only one place online.* Back on the old Internet—before Web 2.0—people believed that posting their content anywhere but their own Web site would somehow ruin their credibility. With social media marketing, however, nothing is further from the truth. If someone stumbles upon your tweet about your book's topic then begins to follow you, ultimately they may see your post about your latest blog entry,

which will send them to your blog, where they will see your book cover, which they will click on and get to your book page on your Web site, which is where you wanted them to be in the first place. And on and on it goes. It's all interconnected and what makes social media viral.

## **PROMOTING YOUR BOOK VIA VIDEOS, PODCASTS, AND BLOGS**

### **Videos**

According to eMarketer, more than 50 percent of Americans watched video online in 2008. And Yahoo! Search Marketing Blog cites that more than one-third of those who watch online share what they see with friends and colleagues. Further, there are at least 2.5 billion streams per month being viewed. Granted, some of those might be junk videos, but if you add quality to a video, the statistics continue to be favorable.

According to Dave Kaminski, of [www.webvideouniversity.com](http://www.webvideouniversity.com), approximately 50 percent of people who watch a video will do whatever action is asked of them. And the conversion rate of using video on Web sites rather than strictly text is more than 10 percent higher! Why? Because 65 percent will watch a video to completion, whereas less than 10 percent will completely read a text-only site.

Unfortunately, many people believe their product or service—or book—cannot be marketed with video. But that is probably not the case. Nonfiction books probably lend themselves to video spots a bit more easily, with authors able to talk about benefits of the book or speaker/authors able to record webinars that people can download (for free or not) from their Web site. (The latter can also be a nice extra revenue stream!)

But novelists are by no means left out in the cold. If you're written fiction, consider creating a book trailer. A book trailer is a video advertisement for a book that looks much like a movie trailer. Book trailers can be acted out, full production pieces, flash videos, animation, or simple still photos set to music with text conveying the story, then circulated online on sites such as YouTube. This can be a big expense, so consider whether you want to create a video of your book yourself or hire someone else to do it for you. Make your book trailer informational, entertaining, short (no more than

three minutes) and professional. Then broadcast it everywhere! Tube Mogul or Traffic Geyser will enable you to send it to up to thirteen different video sites. To follow up, make additional one-minute videos about your book and broadcast them over the following year.

Of course you'll post your video to your Web site and to your social media sites. There are also many video-sharing Web sites out there, such as AniBoom, AtomUploads (part of AtomFilms), BGVIP.TV, Blip.tv, Crackle, Dailymotion, Flickr, Hulu, Tangle, Metacafe, MyVideo, Photobucket, Rayzz, Sevenload, TroopTube, Yahoo! Video, and many others. For do-it-yourselfers, an inexpensive or free way to make videos is using the Flip camera and Utube or motionbox, which is a place to store your videos. There are also editing tools available for the amateur.

## Podcasts

Think of a podcast as an Internet radio show you listen to on demand. The term “podcast” comes from the words iPod and broadcast. But you don't need an iPod to listen to a podcast. You can use another MP3 device or a computer that is capable of playing audio files.

eMarketer has reported that the popularity of podcasts continues to rise. In the Podcast Advertising Report, eMarketer estimates “that there was a 285% increase in size of the U.S. podcast audience in 2007, a growth to 18.5 million.” eMarketer predicts this growth trend to continue with the U.S. podcast audience increasing to sixty-five million in 2012.

With podcasting, the online audio content that you create is delivered via a “feed.” It's similar to that of your blog, but it's for audio instead. Using the feed, listeners can subscribe to your podcast so they're aware of every new episode.

You can listen and subscribe to podcasts through a podcatcher, which is very similar to the feed readers used to read and subscribe to RSS feeds (covered shortly). In fact, many feed readers also enable you to subscribe to podcasts. Podcatchers are also called podcast readers, podcast receivers, and aggregators. A few free podcatchers to check out include: Doppler ([www.dopplerradio.net](http://www.dopplerradio.net)), iTunes ([www.apple.com/itunes/podcasts](http://www.apple.com/itunes/podcasts)), and Juice (<http://juicereceiver.sourceforge.net>).

The best uses for podcasts include telling a story, reading book excerpts, having your own talk show, providing tutorials based on your expertise, conducting interviews or seminars, or offering value-added content via paid subscription. Listeners can hear podcasts directly from the Internet or download them now for listening later. However you use podcasts, they can be a great way to connect with your audience.

## RSS Feeds

Most commonly translated as “really simple syndication” or “rich site summary,” RSS feeds started gaining popularity in 2006. According to Wikipedia, RSS is a “family of web feed format used to publish frequently updated works, such as blogs, news headlines, and audio and video in a standardized format.”

Readers benefit because they can subscribe to updates from their favorite Web sites. And signing up is as easy as clicking on the RSS subscribe button on a blog or Web site. Users benefit because they can syndicate or distribute their fresh content worldwide for free. In other words, every time you create something new and publish it online, a notification goes out to everyone who has asked to be updated. They are alerted via e-mail, mobile texting, or tweet.

OnlyWire ([www.onlywire.com](http://www.onlywire.com)) is a useful tool in that it allows publishers, bloggers, and webmasters to syndicate content to the Internet’s highest-ranked social networking sites all at one time. It enables creators and authors of online content to efficiently reach billions of readers globally. Used by more than 100,000 online publishers, OnlyWire’s four content syndication tools serve over thirty-five million unique page views per month to billions of readers. Its publishing list consists of the best-in-class social networking sites representing the Web’s highest density in terms of readership, including Facebook, Digg, Twitter, Delicious, StumbleUpon, and many others.

Page readers, also called aggregators, are free, and there are many to choose from. We found a decent list at [www.newsonfeeds.com/faq/aggregators](http://www.newsonfeeds.com/faq/aggregators), or you can simply Google “news aggregators.”

Social bookmarks are the small icons found on nearly all blogs, Web sites, and news sites that provide regular, fresh content. Social bookmarking sites like Delicious, Faves, StumbleUpon, BlogMarks, and Diigo allow

you to find and bookmark sites and information of interest. You can save your bookmarks online and access them from anywhere or share them with others.

## Blogs

If you don't already have a blog, we recommend you start one immediately. When you have a book to promote, it only makes sense to use your blog as a promotional tool. Having a blog and posting to it regularly (that is key!) will spread the word about you and your work—and will ultimately help you sell more books.

There are any number of free—and easy!—blogging sites available today. Some of the more popular ones include Wordpress.com, Blogger.com, and Typepad.com. With many, you can pay a fairly nominal fee to access more features. You can also blog via a social network Web site, such as Facebook and LinkedIn. Ning.com is another option for creating a social network with blogs, videos, audios, forums, widgets, and more. You can also set up a blog on your own Web site.

There are about 1.2 million blog posts made each day. Make sure yours count by staying focused on your book's topic. You can stray somewhat off topic once in a while, but only if you think it will be interesting to your readers. Watch your use of keywords too. The search engines love blogs because they are constantly generating fresh content. Once you've got a number of relevant blog posts under your belt, your rankings should start to improve in the search engines.

Turn your blog entries into articles and submit them to other sites or publications, tweaking them to suit, of course. These will usually result in a link back to your blog or Web site, further improving your search engine ranking. You could even write a book that includes the “best of” your blog entries.

What should you blog about? Here are just a few ideas:

- Discuss trends
- Post book reviews
- Lend your voice to a hot issue
- Comment on or feature other blogs

- Interview people in your genre or industry
- Answer FAQs about your book's subject
- Make a checklist
- Let someone else post as a guest
- Reflect on something that happened to you or in the world
- Cover an event

You'll want to comment on other people's blogs, too. But don't just go to any blog; go to those that are relevant to your book's topic. Use one of the blog search engines (such as <http://technorati.com> or <http://blogsearch.google.com>) and look for blogs that are of interest to you. When you start leaving comments, make sure you are genuine. Don't comment just to comment or simply to plug your book; share your sincere thoughts and concerns. You'll be amazed at the connections you can make and the deep conversations you can have.

David Meerman Scott, author of *The New Rules of Marketing and PR* (which he originally self-published on his Web site as an e-book, *The New Rules of PR*), didn't spend a single penny on advertising or promotions when his book came out in 2007. Instead, he offered review copies to more than a hundred important bloggers and sent out twenty news releases. Ultimately, more than five hundred bloggers wrote about the book, which alerted the mainstream media. He's been interviewed by *The Wall Street Journal* (twice!), has appeared on national and local TV programs (including MSNBC and Fox Business), and has spoken on dozens of radio programs and podcasts. "How did they find me? Online, of course!"

Incidentally, Scott's e-book has been downloaded 250,000 times and commented on by thousands of readers and bloggers. And the expanded edition of the book was written as a series of blog entries; Scott has incorporated many reader contributions as part of the book.

Blogging is no longer limited to text online. Now bloggers can connect with their audience on BlogTalkRadio. If you have a telephone, you have the ability to host a live, Internet talk radio show; charges for service range from free to \$99 per month. The network has tens of thousands of hosts and millions of listeners each month, bringing together people with similar interests. This can be key to your whole marketing plan.

Some of its features include live two-way conversations, live streaming and archived podcasts, and a browser-based switchboard wherein a host can play music and conduct interviews with multiple callers. It is also integrated with Facebook, Twitter, and Ning, syndicating its content via RSS and iTunes, as well a growing network of content partners. And, according to the Web site, with “sharing features, easy-to-embed widgets, and innovative mobile applications, our platform drives the viral spread of content and conversations.” Go to [www.blogtalkradio.com](http://www.blogtalkradio.com) to download their press kit, which contains more detailed information.

## Virtual Author Book Tours

One innovative way to promote your book is through virtual book signings, or blog tours. Instead of physically trudging from city to city and bookstore to bookstore, authors can tour virtually through blogs—right from the comfort of their own home.

Blog tours generally start with a description and excerpt of your book on the host blog before your appearance. Then you’ll “appear” on the blog, submitting a short commentary on the topic of your book, thus opening the channels of discussion. For the next week or so, you’ll visit the blog to answer questions and comments from the audience.

Your first step in arranging a blog tour is selecting the blogs you’d like to target, which of course would be the most popular, influential blogs read by our book’s target audience. You may already have some possibilities in mind, but you should still take a look to see what else might be out there. Things in the blogosphere can change quickly, and you don’t want to miss out on a great opportunity.

You will need to do your own research and sample blog content. Start with Technorati and Google. Also note which ones take advertising. Money here can be well spent. M.J. Rose, the savvy author/publisher who runs a marketing service at [AuthorBuzz.com](http://AuthorBuzz.com) says, “The best thing for self-publishers is a blog ad campaign.”

Make your initial contact with bloggers who cover your book’s topic, offering them a review copy of your book in exchange for a stop at their site on your virtual tour. Ideally, you’ll want to schedule the tour shortly after your book is published, making as many virtual stops as possible. Incidentally,

even if your book has been out for a while, you can still take advantage of this opportunity—especially if you can tie in your subject matter to current news, a calendar event, new study released, and so forth.

Penny C. Sansevieri, CEO and founder of Author Marketing Experts, Inc., and author of *Red Hot Internet Publicity* recommends not doing a tour that is limited to a specific time period. “Sure, week-long tours seem fun and exciting,” she says, “but what happens after the week is over? Not much. You’ve got to keep it going. I recommend doing one to five things a day to promote yourself; this should include commenting on blog posts and pitching your topic to bloggers.”

Penny points out that the best kind of promotion online is slow growth over time. Authors need to build their network—their platform—by engaging potential readers and reviewers long before their book comes out.

## Online Communities

Online forums were one of the first Internet-based networking tools. Dating back to around 1995, they were often referred to as chat rooms, message boards, and bulletin boards. Precursors to today’s blog, they were intended to promote dialogue on a specific subject and often created very tight-knit communities. Sue, who has belonged to a running forum for more than ten years, can attest to this. She has become very good friends with many of the other members in that time.

Often maintained by a group of individuals called “administrators,” forums are typically run with a very strict set of guidelines. Moderators have access to what is posted and are usually in charge of banning individuals who break the rules, deleting posts that are considered offensive, and everything else involved in keeping the forum running harmoniously.

Registration is usually a simple process that will probably ask for your real name and e-mail address. Those can be kept private, however, if you come up with a username, or a forum handle. Often members can post a small picture (avatar) and signature, or other images or information to represent themselves. It’s wise for authors to post brief information about their books in their signature.

Your behavior on forums should be similar to that of your Facebook groups. Blatant promotion or spamming is discouraged—and can even result

in your expulsion from the forum. Get to know fellow forumites and participate in the dialogue by posting useful content. There's nothing wrong with sharing your expertise; just don't self-promote, except in your signature.

If you can think of a subject, there is probably a forum for it. They exist for pets, fashion, video games, religion, sports teams, politics, scrapbooking, breastfeeding, infidelity, medical conditions, cooking, gardening—and many other topics people like to talk about. How do you locate them for the publishing industry? Here are some search terms you might try in Yahoo or Google groups:

- Book reviewers
- Book clubs
- Publishers
- Writers
- Self-publishing
- Independent publishing
- Book marketing

Forums are fun and useful. But much like other aspects of social media, they can be real time-wasters if you are not careful.

While social network marketing is an exciting playground in which to make new friends, more ideas await you. Next we look at “Originating Extraordinary ‘Out-of-the-Box’ Opportunities.”

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## Web Sites, Wisdom, and Whimsy

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**Who is using social networks?** Perhaps the question should be, who isn't? According to Forrester Research, 95 percent of 1,217 business decision makers surveyed late last year said they plan to use social networks. What's more, 53 percent of more than three hundred marketers plan to increase social-media marketing this year.



*“To err is human, but to really foul things up you need a computer.” —Paul Ehrlich*

**Online shoppers buy books.** Worldwide, more Internet users are buying books than any other product and the number of book purchases is increasing,

according to a recent Nielsen Online survey. The survey covered more than twenty-six thousand people in forty-eight countries and showed that 41 percent of Internet users had bought books online. This number is up from 34 percent two years ago. The top book-buying countries might surprise you. Based on the percentage of Internet users in each country who bought books online, the top ten are: (1) South Korea—58 percent, (2) Germany—55 percent, (3) Austria—54 percent, (4) Vietnam—54 percent, (5) Brazil—51 percent, (6) Egypt—49 percent, (7) China—48 percent, (8) India—46 percent, (9) Taiwan—45 percent, and (10) the United Kingdom—45 percent.

**Are you tweeting effectively?** When it comes to tweeting well, remember the 60/30/10 rule: 60 percent helpful content; 30 percent engagement with followers sharing insights, feedback, and opinions; and 10 percent personal posts.

**Nominate your blog for an award.** If you've got a well-written blog that is entertaining too, suggest it at <http://blogofthedayawards.blogspot.com>. If selected, you'll gain some recognition with a link on their home page, and you'll get a Daily Blog Awards badge you can put on your site. It's a good place to go if you're looking for some fun blogs to check out.

**Save time with a social media browser.** Based on the premise that Web browsers have not kept up with the way people use the Internet today, Flock ([www.flock.com](http://www.flock.com)) is a fully integrated browser that lets you keep track of recent updates from Facebook, Twitter, Digg, YouTube, among others. Flock continues to add new sites regularly.



*“English? Who needs that? I’m never going to England!” —Homer Simpson*

**See who is saying what in the blogosphere.** Technorati is a research site that keeps track of and ranks blogs and RSS feeds. The site is a powerful portal with a few tricks up its sleeve. When you research a topic and select a particular Web site listing, Technorati provides the site's thumbnail, rank, and reactions by bloggers across the Web. This system allows for quick and balanced research of a topic, as multiple sides of a story/argument are available at one time. Your blog may already be listed here, and if not, add it! Go to [www.technorati.com](http://www.technorati.com).

**Tweet ya later.** Twitter users can go to [www.socialoomph.com](http://www.socialoomph.com)—formerly [www.tweetlater.com](http://www.tweetlater.com)—to write tweets now, then have them sent in the future. It's a great way to stay active on Twitter by writing postings ahead of time and broadcasting them over the next few days. There is no charge for the basic service.

**Join the network for book authors and publishers.** The Book Marketing Network is for book authors, self-publishers, book publishers, publicists, marketers, and others involved in writing, publishing, and marketing books. This active online community was founded by John Kremer, author of *1001 Ways to Market Your Books*. There is also a discussion forum where you can talk about all things publishing. Sign up at <http://bookmarket.ning.com>.

**Sharing on Facebook beats out sharing by e-mail.** How do you know which social sites are most popular? Aside from looking at the raw traffic numbers, a good indicator is data about which sites are seeing the most content shared on them. Mashable—"the world's largest blog focused exclusively on Web 2.0 and social media news"—reports that among the companies with access to tons of this type of data is AddToAny, makers of one the most popular widgets that lets content sites provide readers with an easy way to share stories across multiple social media sites. According to AddToAny, as of July 2009, Facebook dominated sharing, with 24 percent of shares from the widget consisting of users posting items to the social network, which beats out e-mail (11.1 percent) and Twitter (10.8 percent). What this means is the world's most popular social network is also the most popular service for sharing content. This likely fits right in with Facebook's goals, as the site continues to emphasize sharing and prepares for the launch of its own real-time search engine.