
Penguin Authors Guide to Online Marketing

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Getting Started, Getting Online,
and Getting Noticed



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Prepared by the Penguin Group USA Online Marketing Department

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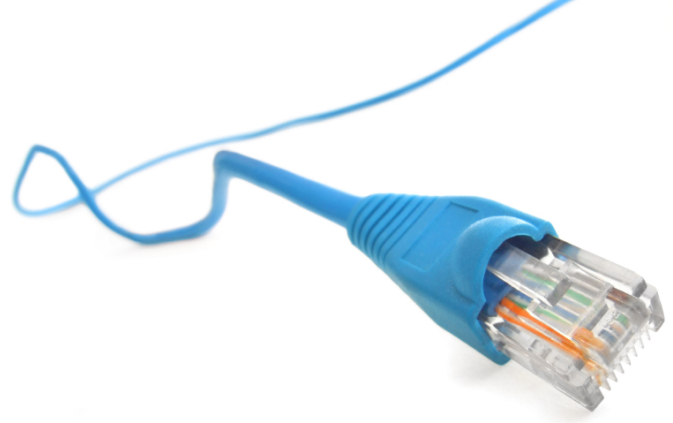
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Getting Started

Penguin Authors Guide to Online Marketing



1. WHAT IS ONLINE MARKETING?

When Allen Lane created Penguin Books in 1935, some of the biggest inventions of that year included radar and the world's first nonleaking ballpoint pen. Since then, the world has changed in unimaginable ways, and we now find ourselves surrounded by new technology and machines the likes of which Lane could only have dreamed of. Indeed, our world – with all of its modern-day conveniences – seems like something Penguin authors Jules Verne or H. G. Wells might have imagined in a futuristic novel. And yet, despite the ubiquitous personal computer and other digital gadgets – from cell phones to iPods – people are *still* buying and reading



Portrait of Allen Lane by Douglas Glass © J.C.C Glass

books. In fact, one of the many things people are using their computers for is to find out about and buy books online. Readers are also using the Web to write about and discuss books in a giant, networked online book club that can travel to the farthest reaches of the globe in a matter of seconds. Because of this, Penguin encourages its authors to have a presence on the Internet and to be part of the on-line discussion.

Online marketing (for books as well as just about everything else these days) is incredibly important. Why? Because online communities are growing at a rapid rate, so rapid that – no matter what the area of interest is – chances are there's a Web site, blog, social networking site, message board, chat room, forum, or podcast that revolves around that subject. Therefore, you need to know how to find the communities discussing the topic you've chosen to write about. You also need to have the online tools and experience that will enable you to let those online communities know about you and your book. Because once they know about you and your book, they're one step closer to buying and reading your book.

Imagine that there are two authors who have books about to be published. Let's call them Author X and Author Y. Author X's book deals with the environment, while Author Y's book revolves around politics. Each is excited to be published, and each wants his book to be a great success.

Author Y, even though there's a vibrant online community centered around all areas of politics, does nothing on the Web to promote either himself or his book. He figures, *Why bother?* He thinks it'll take too much time and guesses it'll be too hard because computers aren't exactly his forte. So he doesn't register his book's title as a domain name; he doesn't create a Web site or a blog. He also doesn't create a page for himself on [Wikipedia](#), and he doesn't make contact with any political Web sites or blogs to let them know his new book is about to be published

(and that he's available for interviews or even guest blogging). Instead, all Author Y does is cross his fingers, hoping his book will be a success.

Finally, Author Y's book appears. It gets a few good reviews and there's some interview interest, but sales are modest. After a few months, new political books appear, and Author Y's book is swept aside in favor of these newer books (and the books of authors who have indeed been stoking Internet interest). Author Y is crushed. He spent so long researching, writing and rewriting the book; he put his heart and soul – not to mention years of effort – into it. *Why, he thinks, didn't it get more attention?*

Author X, on the other hand, registers domain names both for his name and the title of his book as soon as he signs the contract. Once he turns in his manuscript, he posts a "coming soon" placeholder page at the domain name of his book's title and points the domain name of his name to the placeholder page. He submits the Web sites to Google to make sure people can find him and his book online. He next creates an entry for himself on Wikipedia, listing his academic credentials and areas of interest, linking to his placeholder page. He does pretty much the same thing on [Myspace](#) and [Facebook](#). When publication date is about six months away, he starts a blog, posting two to three times a week about environmental issues (always being sure to put the stories and commentary in the context of his upcoming book). He makes contact with similar Web sites and blogs, linking to their sites and getting them to link back to his.

By the time Author X's book comes out, he has a blog readership of thousands, and he has made many great personal and professional connections through his blog. This leads to guest blogging on other Web sites, as well as to a few speaking engagements at conferences and seminars. The book gets some good reviews, and also gets written up on dozens of blogs. It also gets mentions in numerous e-mail newsletters from environmental groups (all of which link back to his own site). Six months after the book's publication, Author X is still busy linking to reviews and blog mentions, as well as interacting with readers who have read his book and have questions and comments. By this time, he also has a mailing list of thousands of people, which he'll use to notify readers when his book comes out in paperback (not to mention letting them know about his next book). By concentrating on effective Internet promotion and creating an online presence, Author X managed to get both himself and his book noticed.

Why you need to be on the Web

As simplistic as the above scenario sounds, it is not too far off the mark. Because of its enormous traffic and targeted audiences, the Web can be a great place for book promotion at every stage of publication: prepublication, as the book comes out, and then of course postpublication. Plus, an online presence can provide additional information and sustained exposure for the book during the "down time" between hardcover and paperback editions. And in a world where more and more consumers are finding out about books through online searches, hav-

ing a place on the Web where your book is talked about is a good thing (no matter where in the process of book production you are).

Having a Web presence is especially important in the six to eight months before publication because that kind of lead time gives reviewers, and other people your publisher is sending galleys to, a sense that your book is a carefully executed publishing endeavor. It also gives the impression that you're a serious professional who is going to stick around and have a long term impact.

Of course, not every book is suited for all online marketing tactics; some material, topics, and genres work better than others. In this first section, we'll highlight the basic decisions that need to be made in order to get started.

How we can help

While Penguin cannot create an individual Web site for each of its writers, we can certainly offer authors information, helping to point them in the right direction. Even if you only have a weekend and \$50, this guide will explain how you can create an online identity so that people who are looking for you or your book can find you. On the other hand, if you have three months and a personal budget to hire a designer to create a Web site (which typically costs approximately \$2,000-\$6,000), this guide will help you get the most out of the experience.

Because a successful marketing campaign is always built of numerous parts, and true impact is made on a consumer only after repeated and worthwhile exposure, we are available to discuss how authors' online marketing can tie into any offline (e.g., publicity, reviews, etc.) and online marketing efforts Penguin's various promotional departments may be undertaking on your behalf.

Basic decisions

Once you've made the decision to have an Internet presence, you'll have to start answering a few basic questions, such as: What sort of online promotion should I pursue? Do I need a blog or just a Web site? Should I create a Wikipedia page or make a video and put it on [Youtube](#)? What about Myspace and Facebook? And, of course, in addition to the question of *What* you also need to answer the question of *When*. Timing is of crucial importance to any online campaign.

In most cases, and for most campaigns, you're going to want to start your online marketing efforts **well ahead of your book's launch or pub date**. In fact, the months leading up to the book's publication are just as important, if not more so, than the period just before and after the book's release. Why? A couple of reasons: since building an online audience takes time – as does showing up in search engines – when the book is out and reviews start appearing, it may be too late to harness the offline press and publicity by creating a Web site or a blog. Instead, what often works best is to start online marketing efforts a few months before the book comes out; this way, you're building interest and educating (as well

as finding, if not creating from scratch) your potential audience. Also, while a Web site can be created in order to ride the wave of press appearances or reviews, sometimes – if a really great Web campaign has been mounted *before* a book's publication – online efforts can actually *lead to* press appearances and reviews. Remember, Internet exposure is just one component of an overall marketing campaign.

Not all marketing tools will work for all authors or books. Any Internet marketing campaign or effort needs to be paired with the right book and content in order to gain maximum benefit and exposure. And while every tool may not be utilized on the same book at the same time, we do suggest trying to use multiple techniques (because a successful online marketing campaign usually consists of a number of different features used at the same time). In addition, please keep in mind that not all of these tactics need to be launched either simultaneously or fully formed. Instead, you can debut a Web site in phases, adding functionality and complexity as times goes on (for instance, as you get closer to your book's publication date). Indeed, this is often the best approach.

But, of course, before you get to that point you need to ask a number of important questions, the answers to which will help you to decide what kind of online promotion you eventually pursue for your book. And in terms of how your initial decisions get made (i.e., Do I need a blog or a Web site?), there are a number of contributing factors. These can include answers to the following:

- What's the genre of my book?
- What's the topic of my book?
- Is this my first book and/or is it part of a series?
- Do I already have an audience, online or offline?
- What is the age range of my readers? (*Promotions targeted to children are subject to certain additional legal restrictions such as verifiable parental consent for children under 14 to receive commercial e-mail messages, and many websites say users must be a certain age – usually 18 or 14 – in order to limit their own legal liability if children under the specified age use their site.*)
- Is there already an online community catering to my topic and/or my potential readers? Or do I need to create the community from scratch?
- If the community already exists, can I easily reach it?
- How much time do I have to devote to the online promotion of this book?
- How much money do I have to spend on the online promotion of this book?
- Do I have contacts at other sites (Webmasters or bloggers) who will either link to or highlight any/all of my online efforts?
- Am I willing to interact with readers and accept feedback and/or comments?
- Am I willing to share personal details with my readers?
- Does my book lend itself to being excerpted?
- Am I willing to create original content exclusively for Web promotion?

The answers to the above will help you decide how to best use the information laid out in this guide. As with any subjective test, there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. Books are like snowflakes in that no two are exactly alike (not even Sudoku books, and those are just numbers!). Because of this – and because what works for one book may not work for another – each online marketing campaign will be different, and will consist of different aspects of what’s described in this document. Answers should become clear as you read through these tips, think about your book and its subject matter, and then wade into the wonderful world of the Web.

2. Domain Names

If you plan to have your own Web site or blog, the very first thing you’re going to want to do is register a domain name. A domain name (also commonly referred to simply as a “domain”) is your Web site’s online address. It’s your virtual location on the World Wide Web, and it’s one of the ways people will find you (for instance, by typing the domain name into a browser). When it’s used online, a domain name is also called a URL (*uniform resource locator* or *universal resource locator*, depending on who you ask). It’s what comes after the standard Web prefix of “http://” (and, of course, www). So when you’re visiting Amazon, for example, by going to www.amazon.com, “Amazon” is the domain name and the “.com” is the domain name extension (more on domain extensions below).

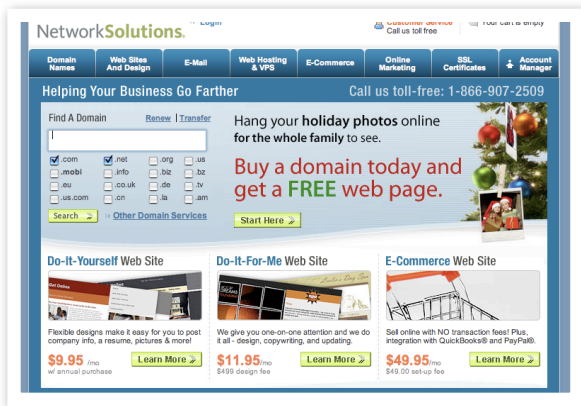
Domain names are kind of like vanity license plates in that you get to choose the name based on what you want it to say. In addition, domain names need to be registered and paid for on an annual basis. Once you buy a domain, it's yours for a set number of years until you decide to no longer renew or reregister it (until this happens, the domain name is yours, and no one else can register the exact same name).



How to register a domain name

There are a number of well-known companies you can use to register a domain name, including [Network Solutions](#), [Go Daddy](#), and [Register.com](#). Each of these sites works in pretty much the same way: from the site's home page you can check to see if the domain name you're thinking of using is available. If it is indeed available, you can buy it by opening an account with the company and purchasing the name directly from them using a credit card. From that point on, the domain name will be yours. But, if the domain name you had hoped to use is already taken, you will need to search for either an alternate name or a different domain extension.

Each of the Web sites mentioned above (Network Solutions, Go Daddy, and Register.com, along with dozens of others) offers pretty much the same type of services and comparable prices (\$10 to \$20 per domain name per year). The im-



Network Solutions

important thing is for you to register your domain name – whether it’s the name of your book or your own name, or both – before anyone else does. If your book is part of a series and you own the series name or trademark, you’ll want to register the series name as well. If Penguin owns the book or series title, or your book or

series title contains the name or logo of Penguin, any of its imprints or intellectual property owned or created by the publisher, it is owned by Penguin. Your domain name may not include these elements without Penguin's written consent.

Choosing a domain name

Since the Web has been around for well over a decade, millions of domain names have already been registered. This means that, in some cases, your own name or the title of your book may already be registered. But even if your chosen domain name has been registered, that doesn’t mean it’s an active Web site (or that it’s been legitimately obtained). And it doesn’t mean that you can’t use it for your site.

Sometimes the domain name and the Web site name are the same. Indeed, sometimes a Web site’s URL is so famous that people will automatically add the “dot com” when talking about the business itself, such as, “I ordered a book from Amazon dot com the other day.” However, in some cases it will be impossible for

your domain name to be the name of your Web site. Instead you may want to, or need to, use an abbreviation or even an acronym for your URL. For instance, if your book is called *Lose Weight in Ten Easy Weeks by Eating Nothing But Pizza*, you're not going to want to have a website address that is www.loseweightinteneasyweeksbyeatingnothingbypizza.com. That's way too long; people would be hard-pressed to remember it, and even if they did, chances are they'd misspell one of the words and would never make it to your Web site.

So in the case of a really long book title, you'll want to come up with a name that's short and punchy (and, of course, that's still on the market). For the hypothetical diet book listed above, instead of going with the full book title, you might want to try for something like thepizzadiet.com or loseweightwithpizza.com. That way, you're getting all of the important bits into the Web address (the fact that the site is about losing weight while eating pizza), but you're not having to resort to literally using the entire title. But don't be too brief; while short and snappy acronyms may work for some businesses and domains (such as MOMA), using an acronym for a really long book title as a domain name is probably not a good idea (www.lwitewbenbp.com anyone?). Conversely, if you have a one-word book title (such as *Fear* or *Bullet*), then you're going to want to add some descriptive words so that the Web site can easily be associated with you and/or it's clear that the site is promoting a book. For example, Web site addresses for *Fear* and *Bullet* could be either fearthebook.com and

bulletthebook.com or fearanovel.com and bulletanovel.com. Or use your last name as part of the book Web site's domain name, such as fearbyyourlastname.com.

Keep in mind that the only punctuation you can use in a domain name is a hyphen; you cannot use periods, exclamation points, or question marks (these are used in computer languages, and your browser would interpret them as code). So even though thepizzadiet.com might be taken, you could always try the-pizza-diet.com. That being said, using hyphens (or too many hyphens) is not a great idea since, if the domain you originally wanted already has a Web site at that location, people could mistake whatever's at thepizzadiet.com for your site located at the-pizza-diet.com.

You'll also need to remember that a domain name is just the first part of your Web site's address. In addition to the domain name, your URL has a specific extension. A Web site extension is what follows your domain name, separated from it by a period or "dot." The most popular extension is "dot com," meaning that your domain name would look something like yourwebsitename.com. While most people just assume a website to be a "dot com" address, there are a number of other options (such as .net or .biz), as well as reasons for choosing something other than a "dot com" extension.

One of the most common extensions other than “dot com” is “dot org.” Web sites with a .org extension are, by definition, not-for-profit Web sites. This is why you’ll find the Web site for the Red Cross at redcross.org and not at redcross.com. However, in most publishing situations – in terms of an author’s Web site or a site devoted to a book or novel – you’re going to want to steer clear of a “dot org” address.

Many foreign countries and territories (more than two hundred of them) have begun using different domain-name extensions. For example, Canadian Web sites have the domain extension .ca, while British sites are co.uk.

What to do if your domain name is taken

If you have your heart set on a specific domain name or if you want a Web site using your own name, but the name has been taken, you still have options. First, type the domain name into a Web browser and hit *Enter*. The browser will search the Web to see whether or not that Web address is being used for a live Web site. If it is, and you just happen to share a name with a Spanish graphic designer who uses his name as a Web site address for his online portfolio, you’re probably going to have to concede defeat and consider using a “dot net” or some other Web site extension for your Web site. But if you go to the Web site and there’s nothing there, or else there’s just a placeholder page with an offer to “buy” the domain name from a third party, you may be able to negotiate for the domain name.

In fact, because so many domain names have already been chosen, and people are still registering names by the thousands each day, a market has sprung up in people selling already registered domain names. During the early days of the Internet, people would spend all day registering general domain names such as food.com and money.com, knowing that one day someone would buy them at a premium cost. (For instance, the domain name men.com sold for \$1.3 million in 2003, and property.com sold for \$750,000 in 2005, which is not bad, considering every domain name is originally registered for about \$10.)

Many people illegally “park” domain names by registering domains they never plan to use but instead just hold hostage until the rightful owners cough up enough money to obtain them. Celebrities often have to do this, either suing or paying large amounts of money to “cybersquatters” who registered their names as domains years ago. In some instances this will be something you’ll be able to resolve easily, for only a few thousand dollars. Other times it will be more difficult, and could involve a very large price tag. But no matter what offer you receive, don’t ever send anyone money without having a lawyer knowledgeable about Internet law approve the transaction first (especially since many of these cybersquatters exist outside the U.S., leaving you with little or no legal recourse).

In order to find out who has registered a domain name that you want, you can examine the domain-name registration record. This is achieved by performing a [Whois](#) lookup. By doing this you’ll be able to see who registered the domain

name, and when. Any number of Web sites can perform a Whois for you; it's free, and all you have to do is enter the domain name you want to look up. The Web site (for instance, Register.com) will then query the master domain-name database and show you the record for whoever registered the Web site. Along with the date the domain name was registered, a Whois will usually also list the name of the person who registered it, along with an e-mail and possibly even a street address (plus the IP or server address currently associated with the domain name). All of this will be very helpful in determining whether or not the domain name has been legitimately registered, and how you can get in touch with the owner in order to make him or her an offer for the domain name. However, some Web sites, when a domain name is registered, allow the owner to remain anonymous; in this case, it will be more difficult to track down whoever registered the domain name. The bottom line is that a domain name is like stock; ownership can always be transferred, but sometimes it's more expensive than others.

You have your domain name. Now what?

Even though you have a domain name for either yourself or your book, nothing is going to appear online until you put something on a Web site server and point your domain to your site. Why? Because a domain name is just a signpost for a virtual location; a domain name is not itself a Web site or Web page. To think of it in real estate terms, a domain name is just a street address; it's not the actual house.

Until you have a Web site or a blog that you can point your domain name to, your domain will exist simply as a record. Your domain name will not automatically become a Web site, and what people will see if they go to your URL right after you register it will be either an error page (since there's not yet a Web site at that address) or else a standard "coming soon" page set up by the company with whom you registered your domain name. If your URL starts appearing somewhere, and people go to your domain name and expect to see a website but instead get an error page, they will most likely lose interest and may never return.

Because of this, it's always best to create your own very simple "coming soon" placeholder page. This page doesn't have to consist of anything more than a brief note stating something like: "Thank you for visiting the Web page of John Doe, author of *Lose Weight in Ten Easy Weeks by Eating Nothing But Pizza*. The book will come out in Fall '09, and this Web site will launch in Spring '09 with info about the book, as well as tasty recipes and tips on how you can start losing weight right away. So please check back then. Thanks." This can be very easily set up, and many of the third-party Web sites listed previously in terms of obtaining a domain name (such as [Network Solutions](#) and [Go Daddy](#)) offer simple do-it-yourself Web site design and hosting packages that will allow you to create a Web site placeholder page, as well as associate it with your domain name.

Getting Online

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3. WEB SITES

Web sites are the foundation of the World Wide Web. They are where pretty much everyone spends their time online. After all, everything is a Web site: [YouTube](#), [Myspace](#), [Facebook](#), [eBay](#), [Amazon](#), [Google](#), [Yahoo](#), [Slate](#), [Salon](#). They're all Web sites. And even things discussed in later sections, such as blogs and wikis, are themselves specific types of Web sites. However, for the purpose of this section, Web site will refer to an author- or book-specific Web site that an individual sets up for the purposes of book promotion.

Web sites are mostly static, and consist of three to nine HTML (*hypertext markup language*) Web pages. These pages, for the typical author/book Web site, usually include the following:

- Author bio and photo
- Book info and cover
- Praise and/or blurbs
- Reviews
- Tour info

- Links to other sites
- Buy-the-book info

Please note that since some of this material will be provided by the publisher (e.g., book info, cover, blurbs, tour info, etc.), Penguin, its outside vendors, artists, and other third parties may own copyrights in this material, and it is being shared solely for use in publicizing your book.

Now, of course, those are just the typical things found on an author/book website. Obviously, if a Web site is being set up prepublication, you won't yet have reviews or tour info (and maybe not even blurbs or a cover). In that case, you can add these things later (which means you'll want to design the Web site in a way that will allow room for it to grow).

You can have more than this in terms of content, but if you do it's best to start organizing the content into subpages. Assume that every page of content will have its own heading in the website navigation and that you never want to have a menu consisting of more than eight or nine items. So if you have more than eight or nine pages of content, you'll want to start grouping them thematically. On the other hand, if you don't have enough content for even two or three pages, you can still obtain a domain name and have a minisite.

A minisite is really just a landing page (the page the user sees when going to your Web address). It allows you to offer basic information about yourself and/or your book, with a picture of you and the book, contact information, and links to other places online where information about you or your topic can be found. This way, when people start searching for you or your book or your topic, at least *something* will show up in the search results. A very basic minisite or placeholder page is all journalists need to make contact for interviews. Bottom line is, in an age in which Google has become ubiquitous, you should have *someplace* on the Internet where people who are looking for you can find you (note that this could also mean a [Facebook](#) or [Myspace](#) page; more on this [later](#)).

Working with a designer

Unless you know how to use programs like Dreamweaver and Photoshop, you're going to want to hire a designer to create and program your site. When working with a designer, you should keep a few things in mind. First of all, when entering into an agreement with a designer, make sure it's extremely clear what you're paying for and what you'll be receiving. For instance, some designers only design and won't actually program or "build" your Web site. There are programmers who can build the site but can't offer any design. Make sure that any work is done on a "work for hire" basis, which means that you own copyright for the code and any artwork that's designed to accompany your site. (For this to be enforceable in court, a written agreement may be required.) And make sure that any photos or imagery the designer is using on the site that is owned by a third

party is used by permission and without any obligation to pay future royalties. For example, if the designer obtains a stock photo from [Corbis](#) and buys only a limited license (in terms of time or rights), you could be required to pay royalties at a later date if your use exceeds the limited license. See Penguin Group Authors' Guide 2006, Pt III: Securing Permissions and Other Clearances. To save yourself from future headaches, have agreements and copyright clearance matters, like all legal matters, reviewed by a knowledgeable attorney.

One of the best ways to find a designer is to spend a few hours visiting the Web sites of other authors and books (preferably within your own genre), keeping a list of the sites that appeal to you. Then, on those sites, look for a credit that says who the site was designed by; this credit is usually near the bottom of the home page, and it's usually a hyperlink to the Web site of the designer. From the designer's Web page, look for a "contact" link and use this to send the designer an e-mail describing your project and asking if he or she is taking on new work, and if so, what he or she usually charges. Make sure the initial price quote includes a few rounds of revision before you get to the programming phase. Because, just as a book goes through many a draft before it's published, your website will go through a number of revisions before it's launched, and it should be clearly spelled out in any contract or agreement that you will be entitled to a certain number of revisions.

You can also find designers by asking friends if they've worked with anyone who did a good job, and of course you can place an ad on an online directory such as your local [Craigslist](#). Regardless of how you find a designer, insist on seeing a portfolio of work before you get started (the more websites the better). And if your Web site is going to be a particularly expensive and/or complicated one, feel free to ask for references.

What should the site consist of?

The most important decision you need to make before your site is created is what the purpose of your site will be. This sounds self-evident, but many times people will start on an overly complicated design, not realizing that what they really want is a simple blog (for which you don't need a fancy, minute-long animated [Flash](#) opening).

The design and content of the Web site need to fit the purpose of the Web site. And, of course, be sure you're using technology that makes sense. Users visiting a Web site for a book about diabetes aren't going to want to figure out how to use a Flash navigation bar with fancy rollovers; they're going to want to be able to find out information and facts about diabetes. Conversely, a book about a young band or a novel by a hip young author should reflect the spirit of the book, and for that you may want to have a few creative multimedia elements.

In addition, keep in mind scalability when you're coming up with the concept of the site. For instance, if the Web site you're designing is for the first book in a new series, then that site – over time – is going to have to grow to accommodate the other books in the series. Also, if you plan to add features and/or functionality to your site at a later date, make sure your designer knows this so that neither your navigation bar nor your home page is so crammed with design elements that – when you're finally ready to add a blog or a reader's guide – there will be no place to put it.

While everyone should have at least the bare minimum on a Web site, the more content and features you have (within reason), the more you're going to have to offer to your readers, and this will prompt them to stay on your site longer. Sites that achieve this – holding users for more than a few seconds, as well as getting them to come back for more – are “sticky,” meaning that people stay on the site once they're there. And what gives a site its “stickiness” will vary from Web site to Web site. For a nonfiction book about the environment, stickiness might come in the form of a Web page that features little-known facts about the signs of global warming. For a novelist's Web site, stickiness might mean posting an original essay about the origin or inspiration for the book. The key to stickiness is to offer something worthwhile to the people visiting your site, something they'll be willing to spend their time consuming.

For books marketed to a younger audience, stickiness might come from fun interactive features on the site. However, bear in mind that the more interactive a Web site (e.g., if e-mail addresses – particularly those of children – or other personal information is collected for marketing purposes), the greater the likelihood you will need legal review. See section 7, [A Few Words from Our Lawyers](#).

Also, acquire the tools to measure the site's success in the form of Web site traffic. In order to help with this, many hosting services like [Network Solutions](#) and [Go Daddy](#) have built-in Web statistics programs. Please note, however, that just because a hosting package includes a statistics program, it doesn't mean that the statistics program will be automatically activated. With many hosting services you need to manually turn on the statistics program (and, if you don't, and you go to check your web traffic six months after you launch, you'll find that there won't be any statistics). If your hosting package does not come with a built-in statistics program, there are lots of third-party Web-traffic programs that your designer can easily graft onto your site. Among them, Google's website traffic tool [Google Analytics](#) is very effective and easy to use (it also works on blogs).

In addition, keep in mind browser compatibility. Your designer may create a Web site that looks good on a Macintosh, using its Safari browser, but the same site could look absolutely terrible on a PC. And if your core audience is academics who are using PCs and will be viewing the website using Internet Explorer, having a site that looks good on a Macintosh will be useless. At the end of the day,

you never know what kind of computer or browser visitors to your Web site will be using, so your designer should create for you a site that looks good on every computer (as well as in recent versions of all major browsers).

Finally, somewhere on the site you should create a link to your book's page on the [Penguin Web site](#). Similarly, provide us with the URL of your Web site and we'll list it on your book page.

Pointing your domain name to your Web site ("Hosting")

Now that you have a domain name and have been working with a designer on a Web site, you need to combine these two elements with a third in order to launch the Web site: a server. A Web site server is the actual physical space of your Web site, meaning that it's the computer storing the files that are getting "served up" on the Web. Because while your designer may preview your Web site on his computer, or you may construct your Web site on your own computer, in order for anyone in the world to view your Web site it needs to be on a computer that's accessible to anyone.

There are many popular companies that offer hosting packages, among them [Network Solutions](#) and [Go Daddy](#). Each offers various kinds of hosting packages based on what kind of functionality you're going to need, as well as what kind of server environment you might want (for instance, Windows versus [Linux](#)). The main thing to avoid when it comes to getting a hosting package is paying for fea-

tures you're never going to use. If all you're looking for is a simple Web site that offers some info about you and your book, with an excerpt or two and an e-mail address where readers can reach you, then you certainly don't need to be paying hundreds of dollars a month for a hosting service that is giving you gigabytes of server space and dozens of features you'll never use.

Something to also keep in mind is that any third-party hosting company is offering you space on a *shared* server. What this means is that the hosting company has a number of servers, and they're offering little bits of them to as many people as they can (think of it as a nightclub where the bouncers are trying to cram in as many clubgoers as possible). This means that if the hosting company's server goes down, your site is also going to go down (even though you didn't do anything to cause it to go down). It also means that if one of the other sites being hosted on your shared server gets hacked or causes the server to crash, then your site maybe be hacked or will also crash. However, these are worst-case scenarios, and such outages are typically minimal. And the price of a dedicated server (meaning that the server is entirely yours, and your site is the only one on it) is prohibitively expensive.

Once you've settled on a hosting company and a server package for your Web site, two things need to be done before your site can go live. First, you need to transfer the files for your Web site to the server. This is done via FTP (file transfer protocol). It's a very easy process, and most likely will be handled by your de-

signer (although you could certainly do it if you have the experience and an FTP program). What your designer is going to need for this is the FTP access codes that your hosting company will provide you when you pay for your package. When you sign up for a hosting plan, the company will send you an e-mail that includes information integral to the setting up of your Web site, such as your Web site's IP address (this will be in numerical form: for example, 10.1.10.160), as well as your FTP access information (this will be in the form of a username and password). This is the information your designer or Webmaster will need to set up your Web site on your server and point your domain name to your server.

4. Blogs

Blogs are an increasingly popular kind of Web site that allow authors to easily update their content and readers to subscribe to its content. The most common aspect of a blog is that content is featured in reverse chronological order on the home page, with the newest entry appearing first. This way, visitors to a blog can instantly view and read the most recent entry. The word "blog" was coined as a contraction of "Web log," meaning a kind of online (or Web) diary (or log).

Most blogs are centered around a single topic, such as music or fashion. And what most bloggers therefore do is collect information on and write about developments pertaining to their subject matter, commenting on and linking to stories in the press (and on other Web sites) about that topic. For instance, a fashion

blogger might write about a story in *The New York Times* reporting that major department stores are choosing one clothing style over another.

Because of the way they organize and collect content, blogs are Web sites where information about certain topics or areas of interest becomes concentrated in one place. And because bloggers are always looking for more content to feature and link to, it's highly rewarding for authors to find blogs about their topic or area of interest. In fact, it's a mutually beneficial situation, since authors are grateful for the exposure and blogs are grateful for the content.

Blogs first became popular as a tool that allowed people to keep online diaries or journals. Indeed, one of the most popular blogging sites and software companies was [Live Journal](#), which offered free online-journal tools to anyone. Live Journal still exists, but its popularity has been eclipsed by newer companies that offer more features and better designs. And while online diaries proved popular for a small circle of friends (circles that would later form the basis of social networking sites like [Myspace](#)), when blogs began to be centered on more universal topics – such as politics or music – they really took off. In fact, the blog search engine [Technorati](#) claimed in December 2007 to be tracking more than 112 million different blogs.

In addition to the content being posted in reverse chronological order, most blogs feature the following:

- Comments – a feature that allows blog readers to post messages on entries
- Tagging – the thematic categorization of blog entries
- Archives – a chronological repository of all past blog entries
- RSS feeds – a mechanism by which users can subscribe to the blog’s content
- Permalinks – a unique Web address for each blog post

How to set up a blog

There are many free and easy-to-use blogging tools available to authors. The three big blogging platforms that currently exist are [WordPress](#), [TypePad](#), and [Blogger](#). Of these three, WordPress and Blogger are free; TypePad has a number of different pricing levels (ranging from \$4.95 a month for their basic plan to \$29.95 a month for their premium package). All of these blog services allow users to quickly and easily set up blogs as well as choose from various templates (in terms of design) and different features. Each of these blogging services offers the basics of blogging: reverse chronological order of posts, RSS feeds, a way for readers to leave comments, and an easy interface for creating and editing posts.



Typical blog

And while free blogging platforms will indeed get you a basic blog, there are a few things you should remember when setting up a blog. For instance, using any of the blogging services listed above will get you a Web site address that contains the name of the blogging platform in the URL, such as yourname.blogger.com, or yourname.typepad.com. The reason for this is that your blog is being run off the server of the blogging platform. This means that your blog is on the same server as hundreds of thousands of others (which of course means that, if the main TypePad or Blogger site goes down or is under repair, your blog will also be down).

However, most blogging platforms allow you to download the original blogging program onto your own server, which will allow you to use your own domain name as a URL. In fact, many hosting services today offer package deals that include free and easy installation of leading blogging platforms, such as WordPress. Also, each of these blogging platforms allow for customization beyond choosing the existing templates that are offered at the time of sign-up. Indeed, all of the major blogging platforms allow their software to be completely changed and customized. That being said, in order to change a blog template to any large degree, some knowledge of HTML coding (in addition to the use of cascading style sheets, also known as CSS) will be necessary.

None of these blogging companies – whether your blog resides on their server or not – can claim ownership of the content you create either solely for your blog or

that you feature on your blog. Original work that you create, post, and use on your blog belongs completely to you. Please note, however, that once something is posted to your blog, it's available on the World Wide Web for everyone to see. Not only that, but keep in mind that almost no blog content is encrypted, so users can easily copy the content of your blog and post it to their site (as well as use it for any other purpose). In addition, search engines such as Google that have Web-crawling "spiders" or "robots" will be indexing, and in many cases caching, your site. This means that the content you post will likely live on for a long time, even if you later take down the content or forbid access to your blog. This is not to discourage you from blogging. Just keep in mind that once you put something into the blogosphere, it will continue to exist for a long, long time.

Blogging best practices

While blogging can be a vital and important tool for directly reaching and/or growing an audience for your book, like anything else done on the Web it needs to be done carefully and with consideration.

For your blog to be considered real you should post at the very least once a week. Two to three times a week is probably a better average. The more you blog, the more you'll get a feel for the kind of tone you should use when blogging. Tone is important since each blog has its own style and sound. The voice you use on your blog will probably be different from the voice you use in your prose (the same way that it's different from the way you write e-mails). As you experiment

with style and format, finding the right voice and rhythm for your blog will take a few weeks. But the bottom line is, without new content a couple of times a week, people won't consider your site to be a true blog. If all you do is link to stories about you that appear elsewhere, or to reviews as they appear, then your blog will be seen instead a "flog" (fake blog) or "plog" (product blog).

And yet, even though the style of a blog is different from that of a mainstream media outlet like a newspaper, several journalistic tenets still apply. For instance, use photos whenever possible (your original photos or ones you've cleared permissions for). Having photos on your blog will make it feel much more inviting – and even more readable – rather than looking like a sea of text. (Of course, the photos should have something to do with what you're writing about; don't post photos of your cats just because they're cute.) You should keep your blog posts centered around a main idea and thought. Spread out longer posts over a number of days, and even weeks. For instance, don't write up a seven thousand word post entitled "My thoughts on the automobile industry," put it on your blog, and then not post again for two weeks. Instead, break those seven thousand words into bite-sized chunks that you post every couple of days over a two-week period, with each chunk centered around its own idea.

Transparency is key when it comes to blogging. You should never hide the fact that you're the one blogging, and that the ostensible purpose of your blog is the promotion of your book. Many people and companies have found themselves in

trouble because they tried to portray themselves as something that they're not. So don't hide the fact that what you're doing is promoting yourself and your book.

And, of course, **be careful**. Don't write anything on your blog that you wouldn't want printed in *The New York Times*. Because while your blog probably won't have the same reach as the *Times*, once the information is posted – even if it's just for a couple of hours – your words will continue to live online. Basically, you should apply to blogging the same rules that you employ for writing and sending e-mail (e.g. use discretion; don't write anything to anyone that you wouldn't want everyone to see; and make sure you don't write or send anything in the heat of the moment). Remember that, even if your book is reviewed by the Penguin legal department, content in your blog that is not included in your published book will not be legally reviewed by Penguin, and could expose you to liability unless you hire an outside lawyer to vet it. On the plus side, it's easier to take down from a blog material that becomes the subject of a legal claim than it is to remove problematic material after-the-fact from a published book.

Marketing to blogs

Because blogs can have huge audiences and usually are based on a set topic, it can be hugely beneficial (and incredibly easy) for you to market directly to blogs. This consists of finding blogs and/or websites that pertain to the topic or theme of your book and approaching them with the offer of a free copy of your book, an

interview, and/or else guest blogging or writing something specifically for their readers.

For authors of nonfiction books centered on a topic popular in the blogosphere – such as politics or music – finding blogs to reach out to will be incredibly easy. For fiction writers (especially first-time authors), it will be a little more difficult. That's not to say it's impossible to find applicable blogs. Rather, it just may take a bit more time.

Marketing to blogs is incredibly simple: all you need to do is to find Web sites or blogs that pertain to your topic, make contact with the blogger or Webmaster, and then make your pitch. And while it may be tempting to fire off an identical e-mail to dozens of sites (ask your lawyer or technical adviser about US laws restricting spam), you'll be guaranteed more success if you employ a personal touch. For instance, if you know the name of the blogger or Webmaster, address him or her and mention something about his or her website; this will show that you're more than just a casual reader of the site.

Also, it makes a lot more sense to refine your focus and send individual e-mails to fewer sites than to send a deluge of identical form-letter e-mails to a bunch of sites. And be sure to keep the tone in your e-mail more informational than promotional; your initial communication to a Web site should not consist of either your press release or a bunch of glowing blurbs. Instead, simply let the blogger

or Webmaster know that the readers of his or her website would be interested in your upcoming book, and then lay out the reasons why you think this is the case. If the blogger or Webmaster isn't interested and tells you so, make sure you end the communication and the relationship there. Don't add the blogger or Webmaster to your mailing list, and don't contact him or her again asking him or her to reconsider. Move on to the next site.

If the blogger or Webmaster *is* interested, begin the discussion of how you could work with him or her. Keep in mind that this is a mutually beneficial relationship: the blogger or Webmaster is looking for content and you're looking for exposure. Because of this, money should never change hands, and you should never ask for or expect a positive review.



Ads on Boing Boing

Now that some blogs (such as [Boing Boing](#)) are generating huge amounts of traffic, they've begun to accept advertising on their sites. In fact, it's not just the huge sites that have ads; these days, a large number of blogs, from those that are well established to others that are just starting out, have on them some form of advertising. In order to

take advantage of this growing trend, [blog ad networks](#) that offer advertisers [one-stop shopping](#) and access to hundreds of blogs have been created.

Blogs can also have very simple advertising on their sites in the form of Google ads. These are immediately identifiable since they look like mini Google results running at the top, bottom, or sides of the blog. These ads, since they're not banner ads featuring graphics, are not terribly invasive and also can be contextual (meaning that the ads Google is serving up on the site have some relation to the content of the site; more on this in a [later](#) section).

Whether or not you will accept ads on your blog or Web site is a personal decision. Certainly, big blogs like Boing Boing and others are not suffering for having ads on their sites. However, when a blog is more of a one-on-one experience (maintained by one author), users tend to shy away from an overtly commercialized approach.

5. Multimedia

Since the creation of the Web in the mid '90s, multimedia has been swirling around at the margins of the Internet. People have always used the Web to view pictures, listen to music, and watch short video clips, but in the early days file sizes were prohibitively large and connection speeds were annoyingly slow (to the point where downloading a three-minute pop song could take more than an hour). But these days, most people have incredibly fast computers hooked up to either cable or wireless modems. This means that computers have now become the portals to a daily multimedia experience, a place where people even watch

movies and TV shows. With all of that as competition, a Web site that's nothing but text will look awfully boring.

Because of this, you'll want to consider using – wherever possible – multimedia examples of your image, your work, or your topic. For instance, if you're writing a novel you could create and post audio clips of yourself reading a chapter or two. Or if your book is about the environment, you could create and post a short video of yourself walking through a city, pointing out various ecological dangers. There's really no limit to the kinds of things you can do online with either audio or video.

And while this may sound complicated and time-consuming – and it certainly can be both – in a world in which everyone has an iPod and cell phones are now mini-television sets, creating multimedia for your site will definitely be worth it.

Photos

Photos are one of the easiest forms of multimedia you can add to a site. As mentioned in the blogging section, the more well-placed pictures you put on a Web site, the better. But be careful not to overdo it; the pictures posted on your Web site or blog should have some connection to your book or topic.

Photos work best on a Web site for a certain type of nonfiction book. For instance, a Web site for a book about the history of automobiles could consist of numerous

photo galleries of cars throughout recent and past decades. In fact, if you have a wealth of visual material – not all of which will make it into the book – the web-site could act as an adjunct to or extension of the book, with people reading the book and then continuing the experience by visiting your Web site. For fiction titles, you'll have fewer chances for a photo gallery.

If you think you're going to have a Web site for which it makes sense to feature lots of photos, make sure you mention that to your designer at the outset. This way, he or she can figure into the budget and time-estimate the creation of photo galleries, as well as come up with a way to feature some of that content on your home page. In addition, you could look into hosting all of your photos on a third-party Web site like [Flickr](#) (more about this in a [later](#) section).

Photos can also be something that you use to encourage participation from your readers. For instance, if your book is about the history of the automobile, along with posting photos you've collected over the years you could invite visitors to your site to send their own photos. They would get a kick out of seeing their photos on your website, and would probably send friends to your site to see their photos. This would of course increase both Web site traffic and awareness of your book. Should you receive complaints that materials posted on your site infringe copyrights or other legally protected property of third parties, you can limit potential damage by promptly taking down the material complained about.

Audio

Sound is another easy thing to add to a Web site; this is both a good and a bad thing. Lots of Web sites tend to overdo it with sound and start playing some sort of audio content the second someone goes to the page. And while your Web designer may think it's a good idea to have a haunting version of "Ashokan Farewell" automatically play whenever someone goes to the Web site of your Civil War era novel, many users will find this annoying. (Also, think about permissions clearances when considering using even short music excerpts.) Even if you give them the option to turn the sound off (and you'd better give them that option), most people will prefer to have Web sites be initially seen, not heard.

There's a better and more intuitive way to use audio on a Web site or a blog. First of all, you'll want to make the audio component integral to the site's concept or topic. Using sound simply as window dressing may only alienate your visitors. Instead, give them something in an audio format that they're going to enjoy and that's going to make real sense in terms of the content of your Web site or blog.

If you're a fiction writer, the most obvious choice would be to record yourself reading excerpts from your work. But you don't have to limit yourself to material found in the novel or stories. You could record yourself talking about the origins of or inspiration for the book, or addressing a challenge that arose while you were writing it. You could also talk about the characters, the tone, or the setting. Basically, anything you would mention at a reading or signing – in order to put

the book in context for an audience – is the kind of thing you should be considering.

If you're a nonfiction writer, you'll want to record the same kinds of things as a fiction writer: excerpts and chapters, as well as anecdotes about the origins of the project. But you'll probably have additional opportunities to record and post audio content because nonfiction material more naturally lends itself to exposition. For instance, you could have audio clips of archival source material, or you could post excerpts from your interviews of research subjects (as long as you have their written consent). You could even create audio footnotes or chapter introductions in which you summarize or expound upon the themes found in your book (think of these as being like the bonus features found on a DVD).

Most of the time, you're going to just post audio clips to your Web site and blog as part of a multimedia or download page (you'll work out with your designer the best way to feature and offer the content). But in addition to this, you could also make your audio available as a [podcast](#).

A podcast is simply audio content delivered via an [RSS feed](#) (which means that people sign up or subscribe to receive it directly rather than go to your site to get it). Setting up a podcast is slightly advanced and won't be covered in this guide. However, there are a number of great books and online resources to get you up

and running if you think you want to have a podcast be part of your site and blog. Your designer may help you with this.

These days it's incredibly easy and inexpensive to record sound. Many computers (especially those made by [Apple](#)) come with built-in microphones and audio-editing software. This allows you to very easily record and edit yourself reading your book or talking about your topic. To get a more professional-sounding recording, you'll want to invest in some audio gear such as a microphone, headphones, and maybe an audio mixer. But even all of that won't cost more than a couple hundred dollars (and thanks to the popularity of podcasting, many music retailers and Web sites offer all-in-one recording [packages](#)).

Video

Just as computers have become less expensive and more powerful over the years, so have video cameras. A decade ago, a camcorder weighed about a dozen pounds and cost thousands of dollars. Today, most cell phones have the capacity to record video, and state-of-the-art cameras now cost only a few thousand dollars. Because of this, the use of video on the Web has exploded.

Incredibly popular Web sites like [Youtube](#) encourage people from all walks of life to create and post their own videos, and even mainstream news outlets like *The New York Times* feature video on their Web sites. Also, Web sites such as [Slate](#) and [Boing Boing](#) have begun to produce original video programming.

More and more authors are creating videos, either of themselves or as a kind of “trailer” for their books. These videos can be anything from an author simply talking about his or her book to scripted short films that feature professional actors, dialogue, and music. Regardless of the scale and production values, what’s important when it comes to video – as with anything you do online – is the content. If you have a good topic and an interesting way to present it, you’ll capture an audience’s attention.

Now that high-quality video cameras are so inexpensive, many computers automatically come with some level of video-editing software. This will make it easy for you to shoot short videos, edit them, and upload them to video-sharing Web sites like Youtube (not to mention putting the videos on your own Web site).

However, please note that video is more difficult than creating audio, so you may want to have a couple of friends help out if you choose to create a video. (When collaborating with others, whether or not money changes hands, agree on credits, copyright ownership and other important matters beforehand and in writing. As with sound and written material, the general principle of permissions clearance applies to third party copyrighted materials used in a video.)

But while videos may be the most difficult form of multimedia to create, they also have the greatest potential to catch fire and become incredibly popular. In-

deed, they're the best chance you have to create a "viral" online marketing element.

As the name suggests, when something is "viral" it means that one person passes it to another, who then passes it on to yet another person. Many videos, from the band OK Go's "[Treadmill Dance](#)" video to the homemade footage of [Mentos exploding out of bottles of Diet Coke](#), have caught the general public's attention and have been seen by millions of people. Because of this, video is something you'll want to consider using on your Web site or blog.

Flash

Flash is not actually a form of media but is instead a computer program that is often used to creation animation for websites. Whenever you go to a site that features lots of things moving around on the screen or a navigation bar with extravagant rollover functionality, chances are it was made with Flash. In fact, when you're working with your designer on your website, he might suggest using Flash somewhere on the site. Designers tend to like Flash because it allows them to create more elaborate designs, but you should know that this will cost more and take longer.

And while Flash can indeed be incredibly effective when used in appropriate amounts, too many designers use Flash just to be, well, "flashy," loading their

sites with superfluous animated openings and overly complex menus. Also, Flash sites are difficult if not impossible for search engines like Google to index, so be judicious in your use of Flash.

Flash can be effectively used for short animated videos. In fact, a number of publishers have had big successes using Flash-animated trailers for books, with the most successful probably being [*Yiddish with Dick and Jane*](#). So if you have an idea for a video that can be best expressed with images and text, then Flash might be the way to go. But keep in mind that Flash is harder to create on your own, and when you work with an outside designer to create a Flash film or animation, it can get pretty expensive awfully fast (Flash trailers can cost anywhere from \$3,000 to \$10,000 dollars).

Getting Noticed

Penguin Authors Guide to Online Marketing



6. HOW TO USE THIRD-PARTY SITES

Now that you've taken your first steps in the world of online marketing by getting started and getting online, it's time to take the next big step: getting noticed. It makes no sense to set up a Web site, especially one that costs a few thousand dollars, and then do nothing to try and get people to go there.

You need to harness the power of third-party Web sites, using their ability to draw traffic to your advantage simply by diverting some of their traffic to your site. No one would build an amazing restaurant in the middle of nowhere, and then one night fling open the doors and expect to have any business. The same goes for your Web site: you need to find your audience, let them know you're out there, and then direct them to your site. And using sites that already exist and get huge amounts of traffic is a great way to do this.

Amazon

While [Amazon](#) is primarily known as a huge online superstore for books – featuring millions and millions of titles to choose from – it can also be a useful tool for online marketing. Why? Because, since it's highly likely that Amazon is one of the first Web sites a consumer will go to in order to find out more about your

book, if you can feature extra or added content on your book page (in addition to what's already there), you can use Amazon to create the "stickiness" discussed previously in the [Web site](#) section. This will keep potential consumers on your book page, and will hopefully tempt them into buying your book.

In order to help you achieve "stickiness," Amazon offers you a number of tools. For instance, along with the content already found on your book page (user and editorial reviews, bibliographic data, and the Amazon "search inside" functionality), you can add your own content to your book page. This can be done by joining the [AmazonConnect](#) program. As Amazon states on their Web site, "This program allows authors to post messages directly to their readers on a wide variety of subjects. Posted messages will appear on the readers' Amazon home page, as well as the author's book detail page(s), profile page and blog. As part of the program, authors are able to create their own profile page with personalized information."

Joining is free and doesn't take more than a few hours of your time. You can participate at various levels. For instance, you may only want to write a general note about how you came to write your book, and nothing else. Or you can syndicate the content of your existing blog to your Amazon page, having your blog automatically feed into your book page. Or, if you wanted to make the commitment, you could make your AmazonConnect page your blog, posting to it a couple of times a week.

Whatever level of commitment you decide on, you should participate in some manner in order to make sure – especially when your book is getting off the ground – that your page on Amazon has more than just your name and the book’s cover and price. If you assume that this is the page that a majority of on-line book buyers will see, then it makes a lot of sense to make sure this page has as much valuable content on it as possible.

Facebook

Social-networking websites have become incredibly popular in the last couple of years, and [Facebook](#) has recently proven itself to be one of the most popular. Facebook got its start as a way for college kids to meet and trade information about themselves. In fact, the site was initially restricted to college students, who aligned themselves within communities based on their schools. After proving incredibly popular with college kids, Facebook decided to open itself up for registration to everyone, and today anyone can join.

Although Facebook is now open to anybody 13 years of age or older, it still retains the general look and feel of its early days. And because of this – the ease of use of the site, and the fact that it has not yet become hugely commercialized – it has proven incredibly popular and continues to grow at a rapid rate. Using Facebook, millions of people keep in touch with their friends and colleagues via a number of incredibly helpful tools.

There are a number of ways that you could use Facebook. You could create a page for either yourself or your book and use that page to reach out to other Facebook users and communities that would be interested. For example, there are more than twelve thousand members of various Jane Austen related groups. So if you had written something that had to do with Jane Austen, her characters, or her world, you could use your page to reach out to them. On your page you would feature your book, offer an excerpt, and provide links to your Web site or blog, and to the book's page on the Penguin site.

The key to creating a Facebook page, as with any aspect of online marketing, is to be transparent and to make sure you're offering something of real value. If your Facebook page (not to mention your Web site or blog) is nothing but an electronic press release saying how wonderful you and your book are, then you're likely just to antagonize anyone who happens to visit. However, if you're offering valuable content, and you make it apparent who you are and what the page is for, people will find real worth in what you're doing. Don't try to be something you're not, and don't try to fool the user into thinking that he or she is at an independently run fan site when it's really you at the controls.

There are also a large number of third-party applications available for Facebook – such as [iRead](#) – that allow you to add a personal touch (as well as increased func-

tionality) to your page. These applications are being added all the time, so check on Facebook for a complete listing.

In addition to creating pages on Facebook, there are also advertising opportunities within the site itself. Facebook allows you to put small ads in front of specific groups. While more expensive than the free outreach offered by making contact with groups and individual members, the ads can be effective. In fact, Facebook itself has created a guide to show you how to take full advantage of its site; you can download it [here](#).

Myspace

Before the recent ascendancy of [Facebook](#), [Myspace](#) was *the* social-networking site, leaving other sites (such as [Friendster](#)) in the dust. In fact, in 2003 and 2004 Myspace became so popular and attracted so many visitors that in 2005 Rupert Murdoch added it to his media empire for \$580 million dollars. (Considering that Facebook has recently been valued at \$15 billion, and that Microsoft paid \$280 million for just a sliver of the company, you can see that Murdoch's payment of half a billion for Myspace was a bargain.) And while Facebook has so far generated more headlines in 2008, Myspace is still an incredibly popular Web site.

Like Facebook, Myspace is free and allows anyone 14 years of age or older to create a page. In addition, Myspace pages feature a number of advanced functions that make them incredibly useful when it comes to either creating an audience

for your book or using that page to stay in touch with your audience. For example, Myspace pages feature blogging capability. In addition to this, Myspace can host photos, audio, and even video. And you can use a Myspace page to send e-mails to your list of Myspace “friends,”



Penguin's Myspace page

letting them know things like when you'll be touring or when you have a new book coming out. (Not to mention, as more and more authors are creating pages on Myspace, you can connect with fellow authors and make them “friends.”) Even [Penguin](#) has a Myspace page.

In addition to your own page, Myspace now has a [Books](#) page featuring a number of titles, as well as focusing on a handful of Myspace book groups. You should use this page to acclimate yourself to the level of book discussion found on Myspace. And while it's difficult to get your book featured on this page, it's certainly not impossible.

Google

[Google](#) is the undisputed champ of search, and you can bet that – at some point or another during the publishing process – someone's going to Google either your name or the title of your book. Because of this you want to make sure that your Web site or blog comes up in the search results, preferably on the first page.

In fact, search has become so important and competitive that there's a whole new area of Internet expertise known as SEO (*search engine optimization*). What SEO experts do is program sites so that they'll appear as high as possible in search rankings. Keep in mind, though, that Google's [PageRank](#) algorithms are a trade secret, and nothing (and no one) can guarantee that you will be on the first page of Google's search results.

The first thing you want to do is make sure your designer is programming your site in such a way that Google's "Web spiders" can easily "crawl" it. This will include making sure that your site has plenty of informative [metatags](#), as well as a [sitemap](#) (for larger sites). This also means not using too much Flash, since Flash sites are essentially layered art images – not words – and thus Google cannot crawl them. Each of these steps will ensure that your site is well placed in Google's search results.

You can also help the process along by submitting your content directly to Google by adding your site to Google's index. This is a [very easy and quick process](#) that consists of nothing more than your submitting your URL and a few descriptive words about your site.

In addition to optimizing your own site and pages for Google, you can use Google for advertising. For instance, if your book is about a very specific topic or area

of interest – something people will be doing searches on (say, autism) – you can advertise on Google’s search-results pages by creating an [Adwords](#) account. This means that if someone were to do a search on “autism,” your ad would show up as one of the paid advertisements on the right side of the screen.

Doing this is a fairly easy process, which many businesses and individuals use in order to create hyper-targeted marketing. You first need to open an Adwords account with Google. Once this is accomplished, you log into the Adwords Web site and choose your search terms. The Adwords Web site will show you how much your search terms cost per click, and you can then refine or widen your search terms in relation to your overall budget. You can set a spending limit per day, as well as for the overall campaign, and you can also limit the results by geographical area. And while you can sometimes achieve respectable results using Google Adwords, you should be advised that an Adwords campaign is sometimes difficult to maintain, and can be expensive for little reward.

In addition to Google Adwords, you can also participate in a Google program known as AdSense. The [Google AdSense](#) program consists of contextual Google ads being delivered directly to your Web site. Whenever someone clicks on one of the ads on your site, you receive a small payment. These ads consist of nothing but text, and the content (based on Google’s “crawling” of your site) should be relevant to your site’s content. However, these are still ads, and there’s a chance that users will be turned off by the idea of a book or author Web site (which is

itself a form of advertising) carrying ads. Also, unless your site has a really large amount of traffic, the amount you would earn from AdSense would be negligible

Wikipedia

In much the same way that Google has become the leader in the field of online search, [Wikipedia](#) is growing and becoming a force to be reckoned with. Built using wiki software (“wiki” is a Hawaiian word for *fast*), Wikipedia [allows anyone](#) to create and/or edit an entry or page. As more and more Wikipedia entries are created, the more relevancy the site is seen to have (which means that its pages get ranked higher and higher on Google). This means that a Wikipedia page about you has the potential to surface higher on Google than either your own site or Amazon’s or Penguin’s page about you. Because of this, you should make sure there’s an entry for yourself and your book on Wikipedia.

However, you should be aware that Wikipedia is a place for information, not promotion. When [creating an entry](#) for yourself and your book, keep it short and stick to the facts. Don’t try to sell the book, or yourself. Steer clear of phrases like “pulse-racing” and “brilliantly insightful.” Because if you load up your entry with lots of adjectives and breathless verbiage, chances are that either a Wikipedia monitor will delete the entry or someone will read it and get so turned off by it that they’ll add something unflattering. To avoid this, you want to make sure that your page on Wikipedia features only the barest of facts, but make sure to

link to your Web site and blog (where you can indeed toot your own horn and say how great you are). You can find a link to a how-to section [here](#).

Youtube

The popularity of online video has exploded in the past couple of years thanks to the fact that video recording capability has become incredibly inexpensive, not to mention standard in devices such as cell phones and digital cameras. In addition, as more and more people have high-speed Internet connections at home and at the office, it's easier than ever to view, download, and stream online video content. This has led to the creation of a number of highly trafficked video-sharing Web sites, the most popular of which is [Youtube](#). In fact, Youtube has become so popular and generates so much traffic that Google bought the company in 2006 for \$1.65 billion.

And because so many people are creating and watching videos, it makes sense for you to create some sort of video element to go with your online campaign. And, if you do, in addition to posting the video on your own site you should upload it to Youtube. Youtube accounts are free, and it takes little technical know-how to upload a video. In addition, Youtube offers users the ability to repost your video to their Web sites and blogs. They can also leave comments on your video, choose it as a "favorite," and easily send a link to their friends. Your Youtube page also keeps track of how many times the video has been viewed. All of these tools are incredibly helpful when it comes to trying to create a "viral" on-

line marketing element. And if you've created more than one video, you can create an entire channel on Youtube featuring information about you, as well as all of your videos.

In addition, Children's authors should be aware that, according to its terms, Youtube "is not intended for children under 13," and users under age 18 are required to have parental consent. Even if these terms are not strictly enforced, children's authors should think twice before posting on this and similar sites.

iTunes

As more music is consumed digitally, and more record sales are from downloads, [iTunes](#) has become an incredibly popular online destination. iTunes is tricky to define since it is, essentially, a computer program (iTunes is what your computer uses to store and play digital music). But the Apple Store *within* iTunes – which is accessed through iTunes and requires an Internet connection – is the place where people can buy and preview not just music but also music videos, podcasts, TV shows, audiobooks, and movies. And because iTunes is generating so much traffic, it's another great tool that you can use in the online promotion of your book. The main way you would use iTunes is to register your podcast.

As described in an earlier section, a [podcast](#) is any kind of ongoing audio content that can be syndicated and delivered via an [RSS feed](#). Once you have created the podcast, you'll want to submit it to iTunes so that it gets listed in their directory

(in addition to making sure your name appears in the iTunes index). Also, there's a chance that iTunes will highlight and promote your podcast on the iTunes podcast page.

Submitting your podcast to iTunes is free, easy, and takes just a few minutes.

Once your feed has been validated and approved, iTunes will send you a link to your podcast page. Preview the page and make sure everything is correct. Be sure to include an image and descriptive copy of your podcast. If you don't know what to put on your iTunes podcast page, visit the pages of some other podcasts listed on iTunes to get ideas. (Please note that you will have to download the iTunes software in order to do any of the things listed above. You do not, however, need to own an iPod.)

You could also use iTunes to create a playlist (also called an iMix), which is a collection of tracks from various artists. Playlists are easily created within iTunes and, once created, iTunes will provide you with a URL that you can put on your Web site or blog that will take users directly to your playlist's page within iTunes. For instance, you could create a compilation of music you listened to while writing the book, or you could put together a soundtrack for the book itself. Of course, the user would have to pay for the music downloads.

Flickr

Along with the explosion of online video, the Web has made it incredibly easy for people to post and share photos. And while there are a number of popular photo-sharing websites, one of the easiest to use is [Flickr](#). Using Flickr, you can post your own photos, add tags and comments, as well as create collections and easily share your photos with others.

For a nonfiction book, it would be very easy to create a photo gallery based on your travels and the research that you conducted for your book. By doing so, you wouldn't have to task your designer with creating a photo gallery (thus saving time and money), not to mention that by using Flickr you could more easily add and delete photos by yourself. Flickr accounts are free, but the site does require you to register with a Yahoo username and password. Per Flickr/Yahoo terms of service, children under 13 must access the site through a Yahoo family account and by action of a parent or guardian.

7. A Few Words from Our Lawyers

The online world has the same legal pitfalls as the offline world, and then some. The ease and speed of communication via the Internet offers almost instantaneous mass distribution, and sometimes massive headaches (including legal ones).

Areas of special legal concern include:

- Collection and use of e-mail addresses for marketing purposes – especially if the online marketing is directed to children under 14
- Online sweepstakes and contests
- User-generated posts, chat rooms, bulletin boards, and blogs that may contain potentially defamatory or infringing content
- Privacy policies and terms of use intended to form a binding contract between Web site owner and users
- Copyright/permissions clearance for third party property
- Agreements for Web-based design and other services
- Use of testimonials/endorsements
- Conducting e-commerce involving online sales, among others

For children's authors we underscore that US law guards children's online privacy even more strictly than adults for reasons including consumer protection of the most vulnerable, and criminal use of the Internet in connection with abuse of children and pornography.

Law firms with established Internet communications practices offer e-newsletters and Web sites summarizing legal developments in these and other areas of legal risk. However, for specific legal questions or claims, neither this guide nor other pre-packaged information is an adequate substitute for personal consultation with legal counsel knowledgeable about the law of Internet communication.

Whether online marketing and promotion are targeted to adults or children, one

way of reducing legal risk without requiring extensive legal review is by maintaining a static (non-interactive) Web site focusing on the basic marketing information found in section 3 of this guide: [Web Sites](#). On the other hand, the marketing benefits described in this guide of a well-designed site with interactive features may be well worth the cost of obtaining initial legal advice and follow-up.

8. Final Thoughts

Now that you've read this guide, we hope that you have a solid foundation for the types of online opportunities that exist for authors. Please note that what we've described in the preceding pages is just to get you started. There are really no limits to what you can achieve online. New Web sites appear daily, and new online trends and ideas grow and proliferate as the Web continues to expand and evolve. In fact, the Internet itself is never a static thing; it is dynamic and always changing.

No matter exactly *how* you choose to have an Internet presence, the important thing is that you're online, that you become part of the conversation. Because, as you saw from our hypothetical authors at the [beginning](#) of this document (Author X and Author Y), with a steady and fair amount of effort, and a bit of time spent on your part, you have the potential to create real awareness of your book.

In terms of your participation online you will, of course, find your own level of comfort with things like blogs and social-networking Web sites. Don't feel pressured by what you see another author doing, or even by what a rival publishing house is doing for its latest big book. Keep in mind that all online marketing techniques won't work for all books, and that the online presence you create should match not only the topic of your book but also your own personality and style. And not everyone is suited to create a blog, video, or podcast. Do what feels right for you, and experiment with the things mentioned in this document at your own speed.

Online marketing alone won't guarantee that your book is a success. But by becoming part of the online conversation – and giving readers the chance to discover you and your book – it at least gives you the opportunity to compete in a world in which everyone is online and everything – from TV shows to governments – has a Web site.

Good luck.

