

# Top 10 Online Author Must Do's

Leveraging the web to do your bidding (woo-ha-ha)



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Dear Author,

The web has been around the block and back. Since the days of the dial up modem and AOL (who inundated your mail box and post office wait line with floppy discs and CD-ROM's) the internet has grown with astounding speed—especially in the last few years.

No longer just a place to send e-mail and check the news, the internet is responsible for apocalyptic shifts in our culture today. While some view the internet as the anti-Christ, I believe the internet is a tool that can be used to expand God's kingdom.

With so many voices, comments and opinions battling for the time and attention of those who have their faces glued to their screen – how can you as an author strategically place your ideas, convictions and stories out there?

Step 1a: Do *something!*

There is a popular saying, “Evil prevails when good men fail to act.” This saying applies all too perfectly to the web.

Whether it be starting to Tweet, creating a Facebook page, or blogging – you must set aside time and find a place online where you can engage and let your voice be heard.

Get started today. Use this document as your field guide. If all else fails, know that I'm here to help answer your questions and equip you through monthly web training sessions (see page 17).

Advancing God's Kingdom together,

Chris Sigfrids



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P.S. – How powerful has the internet and computing become? Find out in this video: <http://bit.ly/2lv0PV>



# #1 – Set up a Facebook “Fan” Page

What is a Facebook Fan Page?

A Facebook Fan page is your own mini web site on Facebook. It's a place for you to place your updates, photos, videos, events and much more.

It's no longer good enough to just have your own web site. You need to go to where your readers are instead of expecting your readers to come to you. Facebook is one way to do just that.

“Fan” Page vs. “Friends” Page?

You may be hesitant to create a “fan” page and opt to settle for a “friend” page because it feels more personal. As someone who has seen many authors go the friend route I advise you strongly to opt to build a fan page for these reasons:

- 1) Facebook doesn't allow you to have more than 5,000 friends. Once you hit 5,000 you won't be allowed to have any more friends. There is no max for fans.
- 2) Fan pages allow you to create a secondary, robust email database. On your fan page you can message all your fans. Not only can you message them, but you can target who you message by gender and by city or state. You can message your fans as much as you'd like. You cannot do this on a friend page.
- 3) Fan pages allow you to post videos, audio, links, comments, quotes, events, pictures, discussion boards, surveys/polls and much more.
- 4) You can create Facebook “ads” that allow you to build fans directly off the Facebook ad. You can learn more about Facebook ads here: <http://www.facebook.com/ads/create/> or in one of the WebEx training sessions talked about above.
- 5) Facebook fan pages give you advanced reporting on who is coming to your fan page, when they're coming, what they're doing (watching videos, posting comments, etc.) where they're coming from and much more. This feature is only available through fan pages.
- 6) You can collect more fans through SMS text messaging. For example we can tell people to text “fan WaterBrook” to FBOOK (32665) from their mobile phones, and they will be added as fans instantly.



- 7) Using FBML (Facebook Markup Language) you can modify the design of your fan page. This is not available on friend pages.
- 8) Fans can post a message on your page, post a fan video, post pictures, and interact with you and other fans in much richer, deeper ways.
- 9) Messaging fans is much easier and faster than messaging your friends. You can message all your fans in about 60 seconds.
- 10) Basically the sky is the limit with a fan page. Live video web streaming, contests, connecting your blog, surveys, and forums – the list goes on and the potential on fan pages is huge!

#### Fascinating Facebook Facts:

- More than 400 million active users
- 50% of active users log on to Facebook in any given day
- Average user has 130 friends
- People spend over 500 billion minutes per month on Facebook
- Average user is connected to 60 pages, groups and events
- More than 100 million Facebook users engage with Facebook on external websites every month

These stats speak for themselves. Sure, there are other sites out there. But none of them give you the quantity of members and the quality of engagement through the applications and services available to authors through Facebook.

#### More Advantages of a Facebook Fan Page

- People can “like” you (used to be called being a “fan” but was recently changed to “like”) – this does two things:
  1. It lets you email that person through Facebook. This is great for sending fans updates on events, promotions, or new releases
  2. When someone “likes” you, it places an alert on their profile page and on the “home” page of all their friends. Talk about viral marketing! If someone has 200 friends (which is very common) and they become your fan, you just reached out to 200 people. If you pick up 100 fans your first month, you’ve just reached out to 20,000 potential readers!



- People can sign up for your events. Facebook users will receive updates on their events in their profile/calendar.
- You can get a discussion going on your page on "The Wall." I highly encourage doing this as whatever posts you and others place on your page will show up on their updates in their profile and on their friends home page. Again – great way to spread the word about your books virally
- Tie in your blog. When you blog on your regular blog it will update automatically on your Facebook page.

#### Facebook Warning:

NEVER EVER say anything on Facebook that you wouldn't say to someone's face. People often make the mistake of "venting" on Facebook. This can lead to serious consequences.

Here are just a couple examples:

<http://moneyfeatures.blogs.money.cnn.com/2009/04/21/fired-for-facebook-dont-let-it-happen-to-you/>

<http://www.lifehack.org/articles/management/how-to-avoid-getting-fired-by-facebook.html>

#### Help Getting Started

For step by step instructions on setting up a Facebook fan page go here: <http://www.facebook.com/advertising/?pages>

WaterBrook Multnomah is also hosting several online WebEx Facebook & Twitter tutorial meetings throughout the year. In these tutorials you can learn how to set up and manage Facebook fan pages and Twitter accounts as well as learn other web savvy techniques. To find out when the next online tutorial is taking place contact Chris Sigfrids at [chris@waterbrookpress.com](mailto:chris@waterbrookpress.com) or refer to page 17.



## #2 – Twitter

Next to Facebook, Twitter is one of the hottest social networking sites out there. There are many well known authors “Tweeting” and seeing amazing results! Here are just a few authors that are on Twitter:

(As of 5/16/10)

John Piper – 69,534 followers

Max Lucado – 70,098 followers

Mark Batterson – 16,606 followers

Matthew Paul Turner – 26,384

Joyce Meyer – 76,126 followers

Twitter in a Nutshell...

You have 140 characters and can write about anything you want. You can also include links in your Tweets.

Twitter Tips

- Don't use all 140 characters. Only go up to about 120. That way when people “retweet” your message it leaves room for them to include additional info or other necessary “retweeting” info.
- Don't copy and paste full links into your tweet. Use <http://bit.ly> to shorten and track your links. Sign up here – <http://bit.ly> – it's free.
- Don't tweet about what you had for breakfast. Instead tweet about things that matter and use Twitter as a way to talk about things that matter to you including: Stories, blogs, Scripture verses, quotes and sites on the web you like. Look at other authors twitter pages to get ideas of what to tweet about.
- Follow those that follow you. This is a way to keep people coming back to your site. When you follow someone they get a notice in their email inbox...a nice little treat!
- Update your profile at least once a day, more if you can.
- Tweet about whatever is dominating the news. Readers appreciate hearing your thoughts on current issues.
- Integrate twitter with other social networking sites like Facebook. Go here for instructions on doing so:  
[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_4668396\\_connect-twitter-facebook-status-updates.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_4668396_connect-twitter-facebook-status-updates.html)



- Use “Tweetadder” to collect more followers and to automatically “Follow Back” on people who are following you. This tool costs around \$55 to purchase (one time purchase) but is extremely valuable in being able to add more followers. Check it out at: <http://www.tweeadder.com>

## Twitter Warning

NEVER EVER say anything on Twitter that you wouldn't say to someone's face. People often make the mistake of “venting” on Twitter. This can lead to serious consequences.

Here are just a couple examples:

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<http://www.lifehack.org/articles/management/how-to-avoid-getting-fired-by-facebook.html>

## Help Getting Started

If you would like additional help with your Twitter Account please email Chris Sigfrids at [chris@waterbrookpres.com](mailto:chris@waterbrookpres.com) for information about the next Twitter training session. Chris does monthly training sessions for Facebook and Twitter. He also has a separate meeting for any other web questions or assistance you may need. See page 17 below.



## #3 – Amazon Connect via RSS

Short for Really Simple Syndication, RSS is a technology solution that enables a web site to publish its content on another web site. RSS feeds are created to distribute (or, syndicate) online content from one site to another. Syndicated content includes such data as news feeds, events listings, personal blogs, headlines, project updates, or excerpts from discussion forums. If you are an author who keeps a blog outside of Amazon.com, the RSS feature of AmazonConnect allows you to surface your blog posts to an audience of known customers on our web site.

RSS is easy to use. All you need to do is locate the RSS feed on your existing blog and register that feed in your AmazonConnect account. Here are some guidelines to get you started.

If you are new to AmazonConnect:

1. Sign up for AmazonConnect at [www.amazon.com/connect](http://www.amazon.com/connect). The first step is to login with a customer account and verify your email address.
2. Once we have verified your e-mail address, you'll be prompted to confirm your author name in Step 2.
3. In Step 3, you'll create your bibliography and request verification for your titles from a trusted third party. Please use the name Jackie Johnson (email:jajohnson@randomhouse.com) for this.
4. If you have an existing blog, you can add an RSS feed in Step 4 of the sign-up process. When you add an RSS feed for your blog, posts from that blog will get distributed to your AmazonConnect account.
5. Click the button next to "Yes, I already have a blog and would like to add its RSS feed URL." This will expand the page and you'll see a window to add the URL.
6. Locate the RSS feed on your existing blog. Look for the orange RSS logo (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS>). When you click on the logo, the URL that appears in the browser window is your RSS feed. \*Your blog may present you with more than one RSS feed option. You'll want to choose the full content option, so that customers can read your full posts instead of excerpts. Your blog may provide feeds

- using a variety of formats (such as RSS, Atom, XML, etc). AmazonConnect supports all versions of RSS and Atom. Please select just one format to register with your AmazonConnect account.\*
7. Once you locate the RSS feed URL on your blog, copy this URL and paste it into the "Specify RSS feed" window in AmazonConnect.
  8. Click "Preview" to make sure you've added the feed correctly. The most recent post to your existing blog should appear in the preview window. If the preview looks correct, click "Add" to register your feed.
  9. Review and accept the AmazonConnect Terms & Conditions to complete your registration.
  10. Go back to your outside blog and write a new post—this is a great opportunity to say hello to your new Amazon readers. Our system updates content from RSS feeds every 10 minutes, so you should see your new post on AmazonConnect shortly after you've posted the message. Your posts will be visible to your readers on their Amazon.com home page. Posts will also surface on your verified book detail pages, your profile page, and your AmazonConnect blog.

If you already have an AmazonConnect account:

1. Log in to your AmazonConnect account at [www.amazon.com/connect](http://www.amazon.com/connect).
2. Go to Your Profile page. You'll see a link next to the "Post a Message" button that says "Add RSS feed." This link will take you to a new page.
3. Locate the RSS feed on your existing blog. Look for the orange RSS logo (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS>). When you click on the logo, the URL that appears in the browser window is your RSS feed. \*Your blog may present you with more than one RSS feed option. You'll want to choose the full content option, so that customers can read your full posts instead of excerpts. Your blog may provide feeds using a variety of formats (such as RSS, Atom, XML, etc). AmazonConnect supports all versions of RSS and Atom. Please select just one format to register with your AmazonConnect account.\*



4. Once you locate the RSS feed URL on your blog, copy this URL and paste it into the “Specify RSS feed” window in AmazonConnect.
5. Click “Preview” to make sure you’ve added the feed correctly. The most recent post to your existing blog should appear in the preview window. If the preview looks correct, click “Add” to register your feed.
6. Go back to your outside blog and write a new post—this is a great opportunity to say hello to your new Amazon readers. Our system updates content from RSS feeds every 10 minutes, so you should see your new post on AmazonConnect shortly after you’ve posted the message. Your posts will be visible to your readers on their Amazon.com home page. Posts will also surface on your verified book detail pages, your profile page, and your AmazonConnect blog.

Questions? Send Amazon an e-mail at [connect-help@amazon.com](mailto:connect-help@amazon.com).





## #4 – Blog

*blog* (blog)

n. A weblog.

intr.v. blogged, blog·ging, blogs

To write entries in, add material to, or maintain a weblog.

Blogs are nothing more than a place for you to sound off and share your stories, ideas, and thoughts...or just rant.

You can blog on your own site or you can use a site like [wordpress.com](http://wordpress.com) or [blogger.com](http://blogger.com). I suggest using a wordpress.com or blogger.com for a few reasons:

1. They're free
2. they're easy to set up and have a ton of robust features that would cost an arm and a leg to have custom added to your web site.
3. It makes it easier for your readers to read and track through RSS (some people won't go to your site to read your blog, they'll read your blog on Facebook, iGoogle, etc).

### Blogging Caveats

1. Don't feel like you have to write 10,000 words (or 1,000 words!). A blog can be just a couple sentences or a video post with a couple comments about why you like it.
2. Don't use your blog as a way to pander your book. A blog is a place for you to share what's on your heart and what's on your mind. That said, it's not that you can't tell people about your book or pull things from your books...just be careful not to be overly promotional in your language and be authentic.
3. Be consistent in the frequency of your posts. Once a day, once a week, or once a month...just keep posting and have fresh content as much as possible. Again – the posts can be short and sweet.



## #5 – Book Give Aways

Sound simple? It is!

Here are some thoughts on how to do it:

1. Give one signed copy of your book away each week to a fan on your Facebook page.
2. Give away a signed copy of your book each week to those who sign up to receive your email newsletter (if you don't have a newsletter, see #8 below).
3. Give away a book at speaking events to those who sign up for your email newsletter. (Be sure to provide a small card they can fill out that asks for their First Name, Last Name, Email and Zip Code.)
4. Have an online "Share Your Story" contest. You choose what story you want to hear (IE – tell me about your worst financial decision or tell me how God has used someone else to meet a felt need...). Choose the best stories to place on your web site and give those story tellers a copy of your book. This is a great way to engage your audience and collect stories to be used in future book releases (or apply to the main thrust of your title).
5. Fiction writers – Do a "Name the next character" contest. Ask readers to submit their suggestions. Give the winner a signed copy off the first print run.
6. Keep a stack of books in your car. You never know when you might get to talking with someone and feel prompted to give them your book.
7. Do a Twitter contest and use this template, "Follow @YOURTWITTERNAME and Tweet @YOURTWITTERNAME, I want to read YOUR BOOK by YOUR NAME: <http://SAMPLEURLTHATGOESTOYOURBOOK> (Ex: @WaterBrookPress, I want to read IF GOD IS GOOD by RANDY ALCORN: <http://bit.ly/beR6d> ). Use the search bar on Twitter to look for your book name and then direct message winners something like this, "You won a copy of BOOK NAME – email an address to send to – [YOUR@EMAILADDRESS.com](mailto:YOUR@EMAILADDRESS.com)"



## #6 – Create an Online Calendar

Let people know what you're up to and where you'll be with an online calendar. Here are things you might place on your calendar on your web site:

1. Upcoming speaking engagements
2. Book signings
3. TV & Radio Interviews
4. Your birthday
5. Book release date
6. Prior book release anniversary date(s)
7. Events you're not participating in, but that you think are important to promote



## #7 – Hand Out Promotional Materials

Take advantage of the marketing materials WaterBrook Multnomah has/is willing to produce for you. Things like bookmarks, flyers, brochures, WaterBrook Multnomah's *StoryTellers' Journal Magazines*, hand outs and more.

Be sure to include links to your Facebook, Twitter, Blog and/or Web Site on the materials you're producing.

Pass them out at events, send along with any mailings you might be sending out or include as an attachment in emails you send.

For questions about promotional materials contact your WaterBrook Multnomah marketing representative.

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## #8 – Email Newsletters

Emails are to the web like peanut butter is to jelly: Sure, you can have one without the other, but WOW are they awesome when you put them together.

Creating and sending out regular email newsletters is one of the best ways to increase the sales of your books.

Tips:

- The first thing to do is begin collecting emails on your web site. Use a solution like [www.ConstantContact.com](http://www.ConstantContact.com) or [www.MailChimp.com](http://www.MailChimp.com) for collecting and sending out your email newsletters. It's easy to use and inexpensive.
- Even if you don't write a newsletter – you should be collecting emails on your site! (If you don't use them, we will on your behalf!)
- Write about something of value to your readers. This could include things like your opinion, observations, recent ah-ha's or whatever you want to talk about.
- Include a section that has information about your book with links to purchase online
- Send out once every two weeks to once each month. Send too frequently and people will want to be taken off your mailing list. Send to sporadically and people will forget you have a newsletter and not open your message.
- Don't send newsletters using your personal email. Not only will this get you into a sticky wicket with your email service provider, you also forego the opportunity to track things like how many people open your newsletter and what links they click on.
- Have your first email newsletter template designed by a professional graphic artist. Don't go cheap...you pay for what you get.



## #9 – Cross Linking

An easy way to grow traffic to your web site is through cross linking. Cross linking is nothing more than linking to a site that, in return, links back to you.

Why cross link?

Google and other search engines “crawl” your site on a regular basis in order to determine where you rank in their searches based on key words, links, meta tags and other info found on your web site. When search engines see that sites are linking to you and that you are linking to them it helps improve your ranking with the search engines, thus resulting in higher placement on search results.

How to Cross Link?

- It's easy – simply add the site that is linking to you on your web site. Simply mention them anywhere on your web site (ex: [www.waterbrookmultnomah.com](http://www.waterbrookmultnomah.com))
- Be sure to include links on other sites you've signed up at. This is usually done in the “Profile/Account” area. Sites like: YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, Tangle, and so on.



## #10 – WaterBrook Multnomah Web Training

Each month, WaterBrook Multnomah offers authors and their staff an opportunity to receive online training and web related advice.

Here are the sessions offered each month:

### Facebook Tutorial & Tips

Email [chris@waterbrookpress.com](mailto:chris@waterbrookpress.com) for times & to RSVP.

This 1 hour session is for help with setting up and maintaining your Facebook pages. Whether you're just getting started or trying to find creative ways to extend your reach on your current Facebook page, this session is for you!

### Twitter Tutorial & Tips

Email [chris@waterbrookpress.com](mailto:chris@waterbrookpress.com) for times & to RSVP.

This 1 hour session covers everything from setting up a Twitter account to some of the more advanced features, tools and tricks for growing your Twitter presence.

### World Wide Web Open House

Email [chris@waterbrookpress.com](mailto:chris@waterbrookpress.com) for times & to RSVP.

This 1 hour session is your opportunity to get advice, suggestions and training on any web related questions or concerns you may have. Web sites, blogging, video, meta-tags, design, development or anything else you can think of!

