

In this day and age of Amazon, social media, viral social media posts, TikTok, book websites, and so on, both the challenges and opportunities are immense for new authors. It's unlikely that you'll be able to write a [Haruki Murakami-style 800-page book](#) and the 19th century conditions no longer prevail which enabled [Leo Tolstoy to write and sell \*Anna Karenina\*](#).

Attention spans of the book-reading audience are in general shorter – though it's worth noting that the 'readership' has expanded perhaps by an order of magnitude since the time of Tolstoy or even since the time of Steinbeck, Hemingway, Scott Fitzgerald or Faulkner.

Now that you've written your YA book or dystopian Sci-Fi book, how do you go about promoting it? Most of the marketing activities noted below are applicable whether you are lucky enough to have been published by a publisher with a marketing budget and that 'well known publisher' reputation and heft or you have decided to go for the self-publication route.

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## Twitter Marketing

If you are active on Twitter, use it! If you have lots of followers and you’re super active, why not tweet about your upcoming book. Here are some specific hashtags that you might want to try and a few links to check out.

Here’s [a great link](#) on what makes Tweets go viral.

And, to be very specific, use author/writer related hashtags on Twitter.

Here are a few popular hashtags:

#amwriting

#writingcommunity

#NaNoWriMo2019

#NaNoWriMo19

#writerslift

#bookTwitter

Here's a list of other [book-related social media hashtags](#)!

[This list](#) is a bit more specific and includes some hashtags from the first list, but there are other suggestions as well.

You may want to 'follow' more people on Twitter though there is a [limit](#) to it. The best piece of wisdom about Twitter is that it's for networking not selling. The networking should lead to sales, though. You want to adopt a 'middle path' approach when it comes to following people on Twitter – i.e. neither follow hundreds of thousands of people like Obama nor be [one of those who follow nobody](#) or like those [who follow only one account](#).

## Goodreads and Facebook Marketing

Goodreads is a great virtual community of book lovers and readers. So, make sure to use its potential by joining relevant Goodreads groups. Take a look at these [groups](#) on Goodreads and see if you want to join any.

Goodreads has a great variety of options including [literature](#), [young adult](#), [book club](#), [romance](#), [fiction](#), [sci fi](#), [reading](#), [writing](#), [thriller](#), [science fiction](#), [mystery](#), and [fantasy](#) groups.

## Your author marketability

Consider how marketable you are as an individual.

Think about the following aspects of your biography:

- What college and/or university did you graduate from?
- What high school?
- What professional organizations do you belong to?
- What personal groups are you a member of?

You can reach out to all of these and let them know that you've got a new book coming out. Offer to send them a free copy of your book and ask them if they would consider a mention in an alumni newsletter or perhaps a mention in the school's newspaper – if they enjoy the book, of course.

## Learn Book Marketing Online

It's never a bad idea to learn new things. If you are going to make a career of writing, then not only should you perhaps consider a 'creating writing' course at a university, you should also explore online courses pertaining to book marketing.

- Skillshare offers [some courses on book marketing](#).
- Udemy also [offers a Book Marketing Course](#).
- And there's a [Book Marketing Course from HayHouse](#).
- Some more [online Book Marketing Courses](#).
- You could even create an online mini-course to promote your book. Think [email newsletters or webinars](#) and so on.

## YouTube for Book Marketing

Just like Amazon, YouTube is also 'huge' anyway you look at it. The subset of YouTubers known as [BookTubers](#) are doing great promotion for books. With their reviews, book hauls, collaborations and even author interviews, you might want to get in touch with one or more of these BookTubers. You may even want to become a BookTuber yourself as it's a field with little-to-moderate competition and definitely not as competitive as, say, gadgets or cellphones or similar 'consumer facing' categories.

*The New York Times* [wrote](#) about some of the BookTubers as did [Huffington Post](#) and [Books Across](#).

Remember that among other things, it's about adaptability. The 21st century reader maybe quite different than a 19th century reader or an 18th century one. Your adaptability as a writer may differentiate you from others. It's like how some [American companies survived and even thrived in Japan](#) even though the original American companies withered and died.

## Marketing at Your Local Library

Enquire if your local library hosts anything related to books or authors. Find the person in charge of events at the local library and get in touch with them to discuss holding a book talk at the library or ask to lead a writing workshop. Don't propose it as a signing because it's a library but rather present it as an informative session for library members. You may present this as a free workshop for people to teach them a bit about publishing or perhaps the 'how to write a book' process. That may encourage people to purchase your book.

## Price Discounts for Early Birds

Time-limited discounts always work well. So, you can have a very limited time only give away of your book. Or a percentage off, perhaps, for people who pre-order your next title.

## Make Sure You Have Your SEO Right

The SEO game is a fast-changing one. It's like microprocessors or cellphone camera technology or cellphone SoCs. Consider how LCD screens are getting replaced by [AMOLED screens](#). Similarly, the principles of SEO are changing very fast and it's all about 'mobile SEO' now and search engines want 'mobile friendly' websites and have a 'mobile first' approach to search.

You should integrate author/book types into your site with your new book title and genre. Proper SEO will ensure your website attracts lots of traffic.

You can always [read Moz](#) to learn more about SEO. Or, you can read [Brian Dean's epic list](#) of Google search ranking factors to learn more about how Google works or how search engines work. You can learn about SEO from [ahrefs](#) or [Neil Patel](#) or the *brand new* [article by Brian Dean](#).

Whether your book belongs to **science fiction/fantasy** or **horror** or **crime/mystery** or **inspirational** or **romance/erotica** categories, you can always use Google's 'related searches' feature at the bottom of a search result page to learn what other related search phrases people are using and you can tweak the SEO of your site accordingly.

You may also use a tool like '**Keywords Everywhere**' from the Chrome web store. Once you add the Chrome plug-in to your Chrome browser, every Google search result page will also show some suggested search phrases in a column on the right of the page.

## Join Indie/Self-Publishing Facebook Groups

Join some indie/self-pubbed Facebook groups. Facebook is either wittingly or unwittingly a participant in many scams – just read about the 'latest' one in [this investigative series](#) by Quartz – and the [Criticism of Facebook Wikipedia entry](#) maybe quite vast Facebook is where the world is, at least for now. So, as a budding author looking to promote your book, you probably got to utilize Facebook's excellent resources for activities such as cross-promotion among other members. Use Facebook's search feature to find those and you can choose to join those that fit your needs.

## Promote Your Book to Local Reporters on the Books or Entertainment Beat

While local newspapers and radio stations are struggling, if you have those in your area, considering sending copies of your book to those reporters who cover books or possibly

‘entertainment.’ You could send them PDFs as well. This applies to local morning TV shows, if you have those in your town. You could include a handwritten note to the recipient for a personal touch.

You’ll be able to ‘sell’ this idea better if you think in terms of being an “educator.” What can you *teach* the viewers/readers? You’re going to generate more interest if you focus on the idea of teaching than selling and producers and editors might be more amenable to those kinds of guests-who-are-authors.

## **Seek Genuine Book Reviews on Amazon, Goodreads and B&N**

Why not make a list of a dozen or two dozen people you know who are interested in reading books. Enquire if they would be interested in reading your book – if they express an interest, offer to send them a copy of your book in return for a real and honest review that they’ll post on the site of your choice. Reviews are *hugely* significant for self-published books and will help the book pick up some sales momentum.

The sites that matter are Goodreads, Amazon and B&N. Your reviewers should ideally cross-post their reviews on all three sites.

## **Author Profile on BookBub**

Author profile on [BookBub](#) and also possibly an ad on their site is useful.

## **Reddit AMA**

Hosting an AMA (ask me anything) on Reddit is useful. There are lots of writing-centric subreddits, so you may choose those to post an AMA. You can promote it via Twitter and Facebook.

## **Guest Speaker on Author Podcasts**

Seek guest speaking opportunities on relevant posts such as this [one for indie authors](#). Podcasts often welcome pitches from authors. If they do not take guest pitches, they might accept books to review on their social media pages? Do they have any advertising opportunities? Depending on your promotion/marketing budget, it might be worth exploring advertising opportunities in mid-size podcasts as you’d be marketing directly to your intended audience.

## Local Book Tour

Go on a book tour in your city. Here are Yelp results for bookstores in [New York City](#), [Chicago](#), and [Los Angeles](#). Pitch bookstores within a 2 to 4-hour radius of your home and talk to the bookstore managers. Ask them if they'd be interested in holding an event for you and your book.

## Contests

Contests help create a buzz. Run a contest that people can enter by posting an honest review of your book online. They may get a second entry if they post about your book on social media using your chosen hashtag. Ask participants to screenshot their review and e-mail or Tweet it to you. Come up with a prize for your winner that the participants will treasure and value! You may offer to have lunch with five participants that you might choose at random.

## Paid Ads

Top 3 places to consider running ads:

- Facebook
- BookBub
- Goodreads

If you are budget conscious, Goodreads gives the best value for money. Goodreads ads are the only ads out of all three sites that potential book buyers are likely to click through and look at when it shows titles that readers may not be familiar with. Plus, Goodreads ads are targeted toward readers, obviously. Facebook ads can get lost in the overall chaos and overabundance of the Facebook ecosystem.

[BookBub](#) is a relatively new site; however, lots of authors use it and it is quite well-known among die-hard book lovers and readers. At the very least, you must create an author page and profile for your book.

Sample a couple of their blog posts.

<https://www.bookbub.com/blog/best-memoirs-according-to-readers-reader-reviews>

<https://www.bookbub.com/blog/technology-changing-mysteries>

The thrillers of the 2020s will play out not under the oceans of the world like they used to in the books of Tom Clancy but in cyberspace. The heroes will not be sturdy manly man who'll be portrayed by Harrison Ford or Brad Pitt or Matt Damon but nerds and rebels and computer

whiz kids whose core skills consist of Python, C, Linux, Java and so on. The 'weapons' will be variously Pegasus, Stuxnet and their like.

## **Merchandise**

Create some individualized items using something like [VistaPrint](#). You could consider, among other things, buying rack cards and business cards. Think twice before buying things such as Frisbees, pens, t-shirts, etc. Rack cards score over bookmarks because rack cards are a bit bigger and you can fit more than one book cover on them and they are less expensive than business cards.

## **Guest Blogging**

This will work if you have a personal story to tell and there is a blogging niche such as travel blogs, mommy blogs or blogs about pets such as dogs or other unusual pets.

## ***Social Media Ideas***

Here are some ideas to get you started on generating content for your social media. Remember that social media has an insatiable appetite for new content. You cannot afford to become irregular or a laggard. You may use tools ... you may opt for 'automation' – though you must also consider the downsides of automation – but you must use social media with a certain regularity to become 'credible' on social media. Adapt these ideas as necessary and use them on your favorite social media platforms.

- Run a contest or a quiz. Contests and trivia quizzes on social media are ever popular.
- Talk about your current reading list.
- Post memes and dog/cat videos. These will usually 'do not harm.'
- Post photos to show how your book traversed from a bare outline to a fully fleshed out finished draft.
- #1lineWednesday on Twitter with one line from your WIP book or finished book. Of course, share an Amazon link or other bookselling platform link.
- If you're 'big' on travel, then consider posting interesting information, trivia, historical facts and so on about your city! Or, you could simply share a couple of your favorite places with your followers.
- Use #writingcommunity on Twitter.
- Use #amwriting on Twitter.
- Hold impromptu AMA (ask me anything!) on Twitter.

- Talk about the ‘tools’ of your trade – about your favorite notebook, pen (if you still use them!), word processor, Trello, Evernote, etc.
- If you are not squeamish about ‘oversharing,’ perhaps share a picture of your home office or writing desk. Do you perhaps have a standing desk?
- Share a picture of you holding the book you’re reading – even if that won’t quite get the Insta Likes that a similar post by Natalie Portman will get.
- Post a photo of a great (or a quirky) review.
- Engage with your followers with a ‘hi’ to your new followers.
- If you want to engage with current news, you’ll have enough fodder to tweet using current hashtags. So, check the trending news and use the hashtags that are trending.
- Have a regular monthly Q&A session.

## Conditional Discounts or Amazon Gift Cards

Discount on the sales price of your book or Amazon Gift Cards to the first ten people that agree to post an honest review might work though they can also possibly turn into double edged swords. If you are confident enough with your book, go for it!

## Virtual Book Tours

With climate change and the climate crisis, real-life touring is not only physically exhausting; it’s also a ‘bummer’ from a climate perspective. Why not schedule a virtual book tour? Plan the logistics with bloggers a few months in advance and enquire if they’d be willing to host you for a guest post and likely giveaways on their blog. In return, you’ll link to their blog in the “tour stop” section of your own site.

## Free Short Story

If you are able to, write, publish and give away a free short story – preferably in the same genre as your book. This can help boost book sales – better still if you can publish your short story in a top site. Or, you could publish the story on your blog and send a link to it to your readers or blog subscribers via your newsletter.

## Join SFWA

Finally, are you a member of [SFWA](#)? If not, consider becoming one!

## Useful Social Media Cheat Sheet:

- Consider adding a Goodreads author widget to your Website.

- You cannot ignore Twitter. So, join Twitter and make the best of it by following some well-known authors in your genre.

You may comment on their posts judiciously. It could be something simple like “great cover!” or “Adding this to my list to read!” This is just to get them to notice you and perhaps some editors/agents might notice you too. Twitter works by you following people and some people following you. So, go follow some agents and editors. Look for their names in the mentions of books similar to yours then go follow them. Even if you aren’t planning to go the traditional publication route, it helps to ‘network’ with other industry professionals.

- Put your book’s title or Amazon link into your email signature.
- Spend some time in research – what is Twitter best for, how to put Instagram to the best use possible and so on. Watch out for new social media trends—the latest and most popular social media platform being TikTok. Is this worth trying? Is this going to endure or is this just a passing fad? Are other writers using the platform?
- Instagram has its own value. So, don’t ignore it.
- Research and compile the most popular, interesting and compelling Twitter and Instagram hashtags.
- A monthly newsletter to your newsletter subscribers. A weekly newsletter is even better but you need to have enough content to share in your newsletter. It needs to be regular.
- Guest blogging is useful. You may offer to share some blog posts by other author friends or bloggers on your social media accounts.
- Pre-schedule social media activity with a service such as HootSuite. With HootSuite, you can schedule Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook posts. You will be able to post to all the different platforms in one go. This saves time. You may choose to schedule a month’s worth of tweets, if you wish.
- Perhaps come up with a unique hashtag for readers to use when they tweet about your book. Encourage your readers to use that hashtag when tweeting about your book.
- Develop some consistency in your social media usage. Read up about the best frequency. Tweet perhaps two to three times per day. Plan out Tweets in advance if you are into that kind of thing. Remember though that Twitter likes relevancy and immediacy. So, tweets that do not touch upon the viral topic of the day won’t go viral. Perhaps locate meaningful or relatable content to tweet which are ‘evergreen’ and don’t need the ‘crutch’ of current news to become viral.
- Try to ‘keep it real’ when it comes to your Twitter feed. People like to know your ‘real’ self rather than a ‘social media’ version of you.

- Think about your goal for social media. If you want to build your Twitter followers, you may offer a contest to accomplish that. People can enter the contest by RTing and following you and perhaps they can get additional points for tagging a friend.
- Don't make your social media posts entirely about you. Retweet other people's book releases, cheer on different authors, help a blood donation request or a GoFundMe request go viral if you find the cause to be worthy of your support.
- Like other people's tweets. This shows that you're not on Twitter just to post about your own stuff. Engaging with others is important if you don't want to appear to give the impression of being a 'narcissist.'
- Long-term targets could be having your own YouTube channel where you can ask subscribers to 'Join' your channel or you could sell merchandise or earn a fee via sharing Amazon affiliate product links. And of course you can talk about your book when your book is ready to be published. If you have a Patreon page with significant page, you could promote your book there.

"Stephen Colbert, here I come!"

"If Rachel Maddow can write books while hosting a daily, prime-time news show, so can I!"

Choose whichever war cry works best you and motivates you. Nobody said writing was going to be easy or 'making a living via writing' was going to be easy. Find a writer who you consider to be your 'lodestar.'

## **The Big Picture Regarding Books and Book Publishing**

It is the best of times and it's the worst of times for authors of all kinds today – whether you are a book author, a screenplay writer, comedy writer, TV show writer, and so on. With so many online subscription content options – Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, YouTube, Hulu, HBO, and last but not the least Disney + — the demand for 'original content' is greater than ever. So, if you book can create a buzz or catch the attention of someone like Oprah or [Natalie Portman](#), then, [the sky is the limit](#).