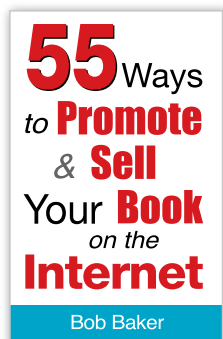


# BLOGGING

# 101



## FOR THE INDEPENDENT AUTHOR



BookBaby has partnered with marketing guru Bob Baker of [www.FullTimeAuthor.com](http://www.FullTimeAuthor.com) to offer you this free excerpt from his book, *55 Ways to Promote & Sell Your Book on the Internet*.

Also, friends of BookBaby get a 20% DISCOUNT if you'd like to purchase the whole book.

To buy now, click [HERE](#), add the book to your shopping cart, and then type "**BookBaby**" into the coupon code field during the checkout process.

# Writers: Tap Into the Blogosphere



One of the best ways to interact with your readers (and make new fans) is by blogging. It's easy, affordable, and particularly well-suited for people like you who love the written word.

Here's a quick primer on blogs and how you can use them to promote your book ...

## Web + Log = "Blog"

A blog is an online journal composed of media-rich articles known as "posts." The term "blogosphere" refers to the ever-expanding collection of blogs across the Internet.

Blogs can be published on any subject matter imaginable — from seafood to vampire fiction. Anyone can easily and inexpensively publish a blog.

In many ways, blogs are just a website with multiple pages. You can visit and read a blog page in the same way you do any other web page. The main thing that sets a blog apart from a basic web page is a nifty web-based file format called **RSS**.



**Definition:** RSS stands for *Really Simple Syndication*. In general, it is used to publish and organize frequently updated digital content, such as blogs, news feeds, and podcasts. The coolest thing about RSS is that it gives people the ability to subscribe to blogs and podcasts.

Your readers can subscribe to your blog using something called a **news reader, feed reader, or aggregator**. Most web browsers allow you to subscribe to feeds directly from their browser. Subscribers can also view blog content using a personalized page set up on Google, Yahoo or AOL.

**Perspective:** If you're not familiar with how these feed readers work, think about how your email inbox operates. You open your email program and up pops all of your latest incoming emails, listed by subject line, with the most recent message at the top.

Feed readers work in a similar way. Open it up, and all of the blogs you subscribe to will show up, with the latest content at the top, usually with just the headline and maybe the first few lines of the blog post displaying. It's a pretty convenient way to have only the information you want delivered to your desktop computer, laptop, or mobile phone.

## Find Blogs That Cater to Your Audience

Later we'll cover publishing your own blog. For now, let's focus on getting as much exposure as possible for your book on other people's existing blogs. The first thing you should do is track down the blogs that are already attracting your ideal readers.

Here are the two best blog directories to start your search:



### Technorati Blog Directory

[www.technorati.com/blogs/directory](http://www.technorati.com/blogs/directory)



### Google Blog Search

[blogsearch.google.com](http://blogsearch.google.com)

Search both sites for words, phrases, and topics related to your book.

Once you've compiled a list of targeted blogs, here are some simple things you can start doing right away:

- **Leave comments.** Most blogs allow you to post comments about each entry, and those comments do get read. Don't misuse this feature with "comment spam" that mindlessly hypes your book. Make sure your comment adds to or amplifies some aspect of the blog author's post. It's okay to make a sensible reference to your book within your comment. At the end, put your name and a link to your web site.

- **Send useful ideas and links to blog authors.** One of your online marketing goals should be to network with and get to know bloggers. Search your favorite blogs for a 'Contact' or 'About' link that includes the email address of the blogger. Store these names and addresses in a database, then occasionally reach out to your contacts. Send compliments, links to sites that might interest them, or news about something you are working on. Connecting with bloggers will provide you with new opportunities, resources, and exposure.

## Uncover Blog Gold With Blogrolls

The term "blogroll" refers to a list of other blogs that bloggers recommend. You'll often find them in a side column on your favorite blogs. Not every blog features them, but the ones that do can be very helpful in your hunt for the perfect blogs.

The reason they are so useful: Blogrolls act as filters that will save you time when researching and identifying blogs that cater to your topic. For instance, if you go to the Music Industry Report blog at [www.MusicIndustryReport.org](http://www.MusicIndustryReport.org), you'll find links to a couple dozen of the best music business related blogs, including mine. If this was your subject, this list would be invaluable.

So when you find a well-read blog that ideally covers your topic, look to see if it features a blogroll and investigate those sites next. And if the best blogs on that list have blogrolls too ... you get the picture. Blogrolls can be great research tools.



## Publish Your Own Blog to Engage Readers and Help Search Engines Find You

So far we've covered what blogs are and how they work, along with some simple ways to get exposure for your book on other people's blogs.

If you really want to be effective in marketing yourself online, you really should publish your own blog and add new content to it on a weekly basis.

Why? Here are seven things a blog can help you accomplish:

- 1 Develop a following.** When you create new content on a regular basis, you give readers a reason to reconnect with you and your topic time and time again. A static web site gives no incentives for repeat exposures.
- 2 Create more tentacles.** Online marketing is all about creating content that will engage people and bring them to your website. The more topics you write about, the better the chance that people will discover your articles in search engines. Every article you write becomes another portal through which potential fans can get to know you.
- 3 Earn better search result positions.** Google and other search engines love blogs because it gives them more content to categorize, and it demonstrates which sites are active and growing. The more active and relevant your blog is, the greater your chances of ranking higher in search results.
- 4 Hone your craft.** Despite your work ethic or best intentions, you never “arrive” at being a great writer. It’s a lifelong process that requires constant practice. What better way to motivate yourself to ply your craft and write something every week?
- 5 Produce material for future books.** I love this aspect of blogs in particular! While you’re honing your craft every week, you are also stockpiling a small library of content. And that content can some day be re-purposed into articles, reports, white papers, and even new books.
- 6 Know your industry.** This is especially true for non-fiction authors. If you position your blog as a resource on your topic (which you should), that forces you to always be on the lookout for news, trends, and fresh ideas related to your subject matter. That makes you even more of an expert and the go-to man or woman in your field.
- 7 Create interaction and community with your readers.** Most bloggers allow readers to leave comments. That’s another thing that sets blogs apart from static web pages: people can interact with them. You should encourage and

ask your readers to leave comments. That will make your blog a place readers want to visit often and express themselves at while there.

## How to Publish Your Own Blog

The great news about blogs: There are many services out there that make it easy to publish one. Here are some popular services to consider:



**HostBaby** [www.HostBaby.com](http://www.HostBaby.com)

Websites for authors and musicians. Build a pro website with blog features in a matter of minutes. Sister company of BookBaby and CD Baby!



**Blogger** [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)

A free service owned by Google. Very easy to set up and use. Just choose a template and go. This is what I've used for years for my own blog.



**WordPress** [www.wordpress.org](http://www.wordpress.org) and [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)

A popular open-source blogging platform that has grown tremendously in recent years. Offers both free and paid versions.



**Posterous** [www.posterous.com](http://www.posterous.com)

A cool blogging platform that makes it easy to share text, photos, audio, and video across all of your social sites. I really like this one!



**Tumblr** [www.tumblr.com](http://www.tumblr.com)

Another easy blog creation site that is similar to Posterous and growing in popularity.



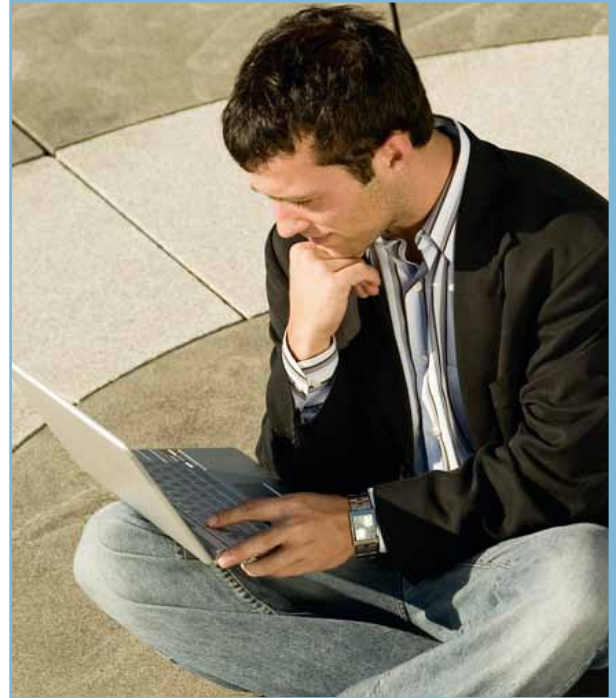
**Six Apart** [www.sixapart.com](http://www.sixapart.com)

A company that offers multiple free and paid online journal options, including TypePad, Moveable Type, and Vox.

## Using Your Blog to Promote and Sell Books

If you already publish a blog or are about to start one, congratulations! You're miles ahead of many authors. Now, here are several ways you can turn your blog into an online book marketing machine:

- **Deliver your news, your way.** The most basic thing you can do with an author blog is announce your activities: events you're going to attend, new titles you've released, awards you've won, media coverage you've just landed, etc. Let people know about all of your book-related activities. But there are other things you should do with your blog too. So read on ...
- **Share your journey.** A blog can be part personal diary, part "making of" documentary. Invite fans to follow along as you log reports about your adventures through the writing and publishing world. Post daily dispatches from the road. Keep fans updated on your creative process, or tell them about the great workshop you gave the night before. Share yourself with your fans and they'll feel more of a connection with you.
- **Post often.** Some bloggers publish something every day; others post entries once or twice a week. Choose a frequency that works for you and do your best to stick with it. I suggest at least one post a week; more if you can swing it. What you want to avoid is DBS (Dead Blog Syndrome) — where weeks or months go by between posts. Lifeless blogs don't get read ... and won't help you sell books!
- **Report on your topic.** Here's an idea that could bring you a lot of targeted traffic. Instead of publishing a blog that promotes you and your book only, create one that acts as a one-stop resource for your entire topic.



For example, if you publish books on stress-free parenting, start the Stress-Free Family Fun Blog. Publish reviews and links to your favorite parenting websites, books, and organizations. You'll attract a lot of incoming traffic from people searching for solutions to their parenting problems. Of course, you can include plenty of plugs for your own book, but the main focus of the blog will not be on you alone.

- **Extend link love.** There's a lot of cross-referencing that takes place in the blog world. As I mentioned in the previous point, you should regularly scour the Web for news and online resources that would be of interest to your fans. Then write about (and link to) those other blogs, sites, authors, etc.

After you publish a new post, send a quick email to the person whose site you plugged. This will often lead to a return link when that webmaster or blogger writes about the exposure they just got on your blog. The best way to get link love is to give it unconditionally in the first place.

- **Make your blog post titles sizzle.** Compare the titles you give your blog posts to the headlines that appear on magazine covers. How do they rate? What's more likely to get one of your readers to click a link to read your latest entry: "Some Good Advice" or "7 Things Every Parent Should Know About Cell Phones"? A great title will attract the ideal type of person it's meant for. So take some time to craft the best, attention-grabbing titles you can.
- **Promote new books as you write them.** Instead of waiting for your new book to be published, you can start marketing a new title the day you decide to write it. For nearly two years, author Chris Anderson blogged about the ideas he was researching for his book *The Long Tail*. Doing so gave him valuable feedback he ended up including in the book (which helped him craft a better book) while also creating a buzz and demand for it.



## Attracting Readers and Making Your Book Blog Shareable

Once you have a blog up and running, it's time to let people know about it. Of course, you should announce your blog to your mailing list. And every time you publish a new post, link to it from your Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and other social media accounts.

These days, the social Web is all about sharing. So you'd be smart to give your blog readers simple tools that allow them to quickly recommend and share links to your blog posts with their network of friends. Here are three free services you can use to add easy share buttons to your blog:

 [www.addtoany.com/](http://www.addtoany.com/)

 [www.sharethis.com/](http://www.sharethis.com/)

 [www.addthis.com/](http://www.addthis.com/)



To add a Facebook "Like" button to your blog, you'll find instructions at

<http://developers.facebook.com/docs/reference/plugins/like/>



Start a free account and list your blog at <http://technorati.com/>



Finally, <http://FeedBurner.com/> is a free service that can help you streamline your RSS feed subscriptions, add interactivity, and include lots of cool features.

We've only scratched the surface of how to use your own blog to promote and sell more books. But if you take the steps outlined on these pages, you'll have a great head start in the blog world.

## About the Author

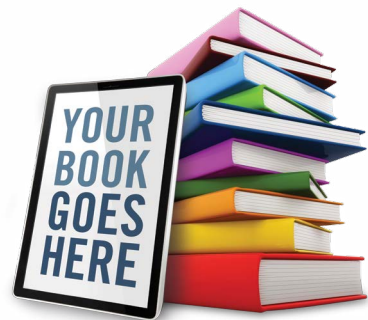


**Bob Baker** is a full-time author and independent publisher who has developed a successful niche writing and speaking about music marketing and self-promotion for songwriters, musicians and bands. He is the president of the St. Louis Publishers Association, a regular presenter at IBPA's Publishing University, and an advocate for the self-publishing movement.

Bob is also an active speaker, blogger and podcaster who is passionate about showing creative people how to make the most of their talents using the Internet and low-cost guerrilla marketing tactics. His books include "55 Ways to Promote & Sell Your Book on the Internet," "Guerrilla Music Marketing Handbook," "Unleash the Artist Within," and more.

Visit [FullTimeAuthor.com](http://FullTimeAuthor.com) and [TheBuzzFactor.com](http://TheBuzzFactor.com) for more details.

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