

## [MySpace, Friendster, Squidoo: Which is Right for You?](#)

These days, some may tell you it isn't all about the blog anymore. To be seen on the Internet, and to promote your books, CDs, and other products, you have to make friends online, and become involved in a network of like-minded people. If no such place exists, you are then charged with creating such a safe house in the hopes of attracting people who might enjoy what you write.

The concept of the online social network is all the Internet rage. Where blogs allow website owners to add content and promote various products and ideas, involvement in a social network helps one target a specific audience and broaden exposure in a relevant environment. As the world continues to theoretically shrink with communal sharing of ideas, videos, music, and images, people can establish different levels of relationships through these networks, be they casual or intimate.

As someone with a book, CD, or product to sell, involvement in social networks can raise awareness of your brand, contribute to link popularity for your main website, and help your overall image become more dynamic and interactive in the mind of a potential customer.

However, one wants to be certain not to spread the talent and effort too thinly. While it is important to set aside some time to promote via the Internet, having too many eggs in the basket may prove cumbersome. Should you join as many social sites as possible. It is recommended from a branding standpoint. Establish your name on each site and provide the fundamental information about your books, goods and services with the necessary Web links, let this be the minimum effort you put into a site. With some sites you may find you participate more than with others. Only your comfort level and commitment to time will ascertain where the bulk of your promotional efforts will go.

So, to which social networks should you subscribe? There are quite a few that have gained world popularity in recent months, some are even cited on news programs and other established websites. Some cater to the general public, some to niche communities. Finding out where you and your books belong doesn't have to be a chore. Here follows a brief survey of three social websites, two established and one up-and-comer:

**MySpace:** MySpace just may be the pet rock of the Internet. Everybody seems to use MySpace for their online headquarters these days: celebrities, music groups, authors, and everyday people. What attracts users to MySpace is its multi-functionality. Users can post daily entries in a weblog, share pertinent info on a main page for new visitors, post quick bulletins to friends with a single keystroke, and join message board communities with people who share similar interests.

Authors and musicians find MySpace especially helpful as a promotional tool for their works. Musicians may upload songs in MP3 format for listeners to sample, while writers can present book covers, excerpts, and links to purchase. The act of obtaining "friends" within MySpace increases the possibility of exposure as MySpace sites become interconnected through user activity. Leaving messages for "friends" on their respective MySpace sites establishes your brand and advertises your own page. The more active you are on MySpace, the more attention you bring to your works. With regards to functionality and popularity, this is definitely one all authors should consider joining.

**Friendster:** Friendster works along the same principles as MySpace, which is understandable since this site preceded the other by about a year. Friendster allows for users to post blogs and photos and connect with other Friendster users who share similar interests through private messaging and group message boards. Though not as much in the public eye as MySpace, to set up a rudimentary information page on your site, content, and products on Friendster may be beneficial in attracting other members searching for your interests.

**Squidoo:** With an odd-looking, squid-like mascot, Squidoo is a fast-growing social network that allows users to create "lenses" relating to various topics. An author for example, may choose to create an informational "lens" on the topic of his/her book, and format the content of the page to suit the information. How Squidoo differs from other social network sites is the use of set modules which build each page. There is no set blog software within Squidoo, but users may implement RSS feeds, text content, and affiliate links from any given number of participating retailers to build a page.

An author of a baseball book can, for example, implement the RSS feed of his weblog into Squidoo, link to relevant baseball sites with a link module, and link to his book on Amazon.com. Affiliation links allow for the Squidoo user to earn a percentage of sales attributed to the site as well.

The one advantage to establishing a lens on Squidoo is that, with the RSS feature, one may build two social networks at once. By updating a blog at MySpace or Friendster, the feed applied to Squidoo will update, saving time on updating the lens altogether.

Of course, this list of social networks is far from complete. As the Internet continues to expand, certainly more niche communities will launch in order to attract users. Some may explode like MySpace, while others maintain a steady user base like Friendster. Either way, anybody with a book, CD, or item to sell on the Internet should take advantage of the extra exposure, and determine how much effort should go into each site. Nurture your brand across

the Internet, and you are certain to see recognition and sales grow.

### About the Author

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