



Pre-Release Checklist

Minimum 6 Months Before Release	In Progress	Complete
Set up social media profiles and start interacting with readers.		
Join reader groups and make hashtag lists.		
Start editing.		
Create your brand.		
Post social media content – Your writing journey. Connect with other authors.		
3 Months Before Release		
Self-edit and complete revision requests from editor.		
Compile a list of bloggers and reviewers and get in touch. Keep a spreadsheet.		
Create website.		
Create book trailer .		
Write your blurb (This is a free service to all Scott Editorial writers).		
Start sharing teasers. I.e., the elevator pitch taken from your blurb.		
Set up your pre-order.		
2 Months Before Release		
Send to proofreader.		
Get 2 cover mock-ups.		
Create a media pack .		
Organize your book blog tour .		
Connect with beta-readers.		
Start the social media countdown to cover reveal and release.		
1 Month Before Release		
Proof in a different format. I.e., print it out or download and read on Kindle.		
Purchase ISBN (No need to buy if only selling with Amazon).		
Send to beta-readers (individual dates with bloggers will be arranged with them).		
Post in writers' groups asking for them to vote on your mock-ups (optional).		
Cover reveal.		
Contact ARC readers ¹ – Send via BookFunnel or NetGalley.		
2 Weeks Before Release		
Create social media content. I.e., cover with a relevant background and reviews.		
Formatting.		
Countdown .		
Book Launch		
Set up Goodreads – Join the Author Program.		
Set up Amazon Central .		
Create A+ Content		
Create TikTok shop.		

¹ *Make sure to remind ARC readers that they can't say 'ARC' in an Amazon review. It will be removed.



Where to Start?

Marketing your new release can start from the minute the idea comes to mind. It could all start with a photo of you looking at a blank screen and a caption above that says, ‘What would happen if... {insert idea}.’ – This can be something you do retrospectively.

At whatever point you decide to engage with potential readers, the first thing you need to consider is branding. This is about creating a few things that, when the readers see one of them, they instantly recognize that this is content from you.

Branding

- Your name – Whether you are publishing with your own name or a pen name, first do a bit of research. It really is worth checking to make sure there is not someone out there who people would know and you would not want to be associated with.
- A logo – These come in very handy for authors who would like to stay anonymous. You can create one for free on sites like Canva. Remember, whatever colours and fonts you use for your logo will be the primary colors and fonts for your website.
- Author picture – If you are not going to rely solely on a logo, make sure you have a professional picture. It doesn’t need to involve an expensive photoshoot, just a willing friend and a camera. Do your research. Go online and look at pictures of other authors who write in the same style as you.
- Website – There are some great free options out there. I.e., [Wix](#), [GoDaddy](#), [Scott Editorial](#). If you’re not ready to pay for a site and don’t want to advertise your free site name, most writers use a [QR code](#) to direct readers to the page. There is so much you can do with your website. It can just be a place to share upcoming promotions and releases, or you could start a blog and release chapters of your new book to entice readers. Your website is also a great place to sell books.



Social Media – Pre-launch

Now that you have branding covered, it’s time to start engaging with social content. While posting your own content, engage with readers. Find, Follow, Befriend. While you are still writing, get those follower numbers up.

- Join as many reader groups as possible on Facebook and follow the members you think might enjoy your book.
- Post about the books you are reading. Connect with other writers, bloggers, Instagrammers, booktokers. For the writers, offer to post for them if they will return the favour when your book comes out. For all, if they have a large following, offer them a free copy of your book in exchange for a couple of posts, or maybe even a review.

- For your own content – Take your reader on the journey. Where do you go looking for ideas? Videos exploring big, old libraries are always a hit on social media.
- What are you listening to while you write?
- Where is your book set? Have someone take a video of you walking around, pointing out the places where your scenes take place. Add in little teasers. I.e., this is where one of my characters meets the love of their life.
- The best tool you have is a Reel (Instagram and Facebook). These are public, so you are extending your reach beyond your friends and followers. You don't have to be in the video, and it doesn't even have to be a video. You can now turn photos into Reels.
- Readers want to know about you! Keep away from getting too personal, but let them see things like your writing space or your dream writing space. Your other hobbies, such as gardening or horse riding. A bit of scenery from a day out. Your favorite coffee cup. Little things you keep on your desk.
- When it comes to producing content for social media, try not to do this on a daily basis. You'll end up going down the social media rabbit hole, and what you should be doing is writing. Once a week, set aside time to schedule your posts. It will also keep you organized and make sure you are posting/sharing promotional material at the right times (Most platforms will let you know when your followers are most active).
- Take some photos of your book in nice places, or if you haven't got your author copy yet, there are lots of free resources that only need a picture of the cover. <https://bookbrush.com/> <https://www.canva.com/mockups> <https://placeit.net/> (Only a few are free on PlaceIt).
- Get in touch with local and national book groups and offer them advanced copies in exchange for a post and review.
- Some other ideas – Do you sit somewhere and people-watch? Do you take country walks to blow away the cobwebs? Are there treats and rewards you give yourself for reaching a writing goal?
- When you're out and about, keep your phone in hand. If you see anything that makes a good picture, you can find a writing/book-related caption to go with it. Even something as simple as the leaves starting to fall and a caption that says, 'My writing season has arrived. I'll keep you posted 😊'.
- If you are not visually creative, keep it simple until you find your flow. Canva is a great tool that keeps things simple, and whereas most of the time, we will only recommend using what is free, a Canva subscription can be worth the money. Start by taking screenshots of posts you liked and see if you can adapt the style to you.





The Book Blog Tour

A book blog tour is a virtual book tour. Connect with bloggers who will read and review your book on their blogs and social media.



- Like most things, you can either hire a promoter to arrange the tour or you can do it yourself.

If you are arranging your own tour, you'll need to do the following:

- Email bloggers who have previously blogged about similar books in your genre.
- When they come back saying they would love to blog about your book, send them a copy, preferably through either BookFunnel or NetGalley. Both platforms will help you get the review out of the reader.
- Create your schedule. The blogger will give you a date for when their review will be ready.
- Advertise these dates across your social media and website.
- [Create a media kit](#) for the bloggers to use. This will include your bio, author picture, cover images, and any testimonials you already have.
- As the dates arrive, publish content that directs readers to your reviews in the blog and on the bloggers' social media (don't forget to tag your bloggers).
- During your tour, do giveaways. For example, if 50 people like a post, you will send out 5 signed copies randomly selected from the people who liked your post.
- Some bloggers will ask you to do a Q&A. This is great material for your website as well as your social media platforms. I know this would freak out a lot of writers, but if your book takes off, people will want to talk to you about it, so you might as well get used to it early on.
- As part of your tour, to keep momentum going, a great way to show off all the great reviews bloggers have given you is to take part in a 'Takeover'. Remember all those writers you connected with to promote their books while you were writing yours? Takeovers are a great way for writers to help each other. If you want to know exactly what is involved in a Takeover, [click here](#).



Creating a Media Pack

This is where you get to be creative. If you are not the most visually creative person, don't worry. There are so many tools out there to help you create content, and you can get a lot of them for free.

What visual content should be included?

A Book Trailer

- You can create these yourself or outsource. If you want to create for yourself and you don't have any videos that would work for a trailer, here is where you can find some: <https://www.pexels.com/>
<https://pixabay.com/>

If you can't find what you're looking for, search for royalty-free videos (don't forget to give the artist a shout-out on social media or make a donation if you can).

To create the trailer. A great free tool is <https://clipchamp.com/>

Your trailer should tell the story of your blurb. Take the highlights from your blurb and put the text over the relevant video. For an example of a trailer created with the above sites, [click here](#) (scroll to the bottom of the page in the link for the trailer).

Make a few different trailers and try to keep them all under 90 seconds long. (Feel free to make a slightly longer one that you can put on your website.)

These are all about enticing readers, so as you work through your edits, pull out the 'punchy' lines/the lines that sum up your characters/allude to something exciting.

Write Your Bio

- This should be written in 3rd person (unless it's on your own website). Aim for brevity, relevance, and professionalism. Target the bio to the market. Keep biographical details limited unless it's really interesting (often around travel or significant achievement) or relevant to what you're writing (e.g. if you're writing a medical novel and you are a doctor). Do mention studies, but don't overplay them. Consider any professional memberships.

If this is your first book and you have no other writing experience, use words like debut. Say how you got here and what made you decide to write the book.

Other Material to Include

- Your author picture. It needs to scream, 'I am a professional writer'. No holiday pictures or images where it is obvious someone has been cut out. Make you the focus, so don't have a busy background or blur the background. This also means trying to avoid a picture of you holding your book. You at a signing or an event is fine, but you unboxing your first book can look amateurish.
- Your previous titles – Create a pdf or png/jpeg that includes a picture of each cover with short blurbs next to them.

Your blurb and synopsis

- If you're a Scott Editorial writer, don't worry, this will be done for you. If you have to write this yourself, the first thing you need to do is shrug off any imposter syndrome and make sure your book shines with

as much expressive, positive language as possible. (If you are writing a synopsis for an agent, do not allude to anything. Tell them exactly what happens.)



Pre-Release Countdown

The biggest piece of advice I can give you when you are stepping into your pre-release countdown is to get organized! Plan out everything you want to do and when you want to do it. Keep a spreadsheet and record how well every marketing strategy went. Also, include a spreadsheet that details what is allowed on each reader's group you want to post to and when. Most groups will have a promotion day or will allow you to promote as long as you don't include external links. All this information you collect will help you create an organized, time-based marketing plan.

Newsletters

- If this is your first release, don't be worried if you don't have an extensive email list, but even with a few recipients, this is a good time to make this habit. Getting email addresses for your newsletter will involve thinking outside of the box. Consider the best way to get to your target audience. Social media can help you here. You can offer to follow readers on Instagram/TikTok in exchange for them signing up for your newsletter. How about posting chapters of other books/stories you have? Entice your readers. If they want to know how the story ends or want more chapters, all they need to do is sign up for your newsletter. If they bring a friend over to be a potential fan, they get a bonus chapter. Other writers are generally happy to help. Offer to promote their books on your social and in your newsletter if they do the same. For this, you want to be getting in touch with more seasoned indie authors in your genre. Everyone loves getting something for free, and readers are no exception. As part of your book launch, do a promotion before release so that anyone who signs up for your newsletter gets sent a (digital) copy of the book.

Pre-orders

- You can put your book on to pre-order up to a year in advance. The minimum you are looking at is a month. Use your social to offer little incentives for pre-orders. If you have more than one book in a series, you can offer the first book for free to all who pre-order.

Pre-order warning! Amazon does not take kindly to you cancelling a pre-order date and will ban you for a year if you do. If this happens to you, get in touch with them, and if it is your first infraction, they will probably lift the ban.

Although setting up pre-orders is a great way to get the marketing rolling, if you are a new author, think carefully before you set a date. Speak to your editor, formatter, cover designer, etc., and make sure they

agree with this date. The last thing you want to do after you have spent months/years writing the book is rush through editing and proofing so you don't miss your date.

The Countdown

- At least 2 weeks before you want to be making a lot of noise across social media – This is why you want to be completely finished with editing, proofing, cover design, and the blurb, so you can devote all your spare time to marketing. There is also another reason. One last proof! A few days before your release, set aside some time and download your manuscript onto your Kindle (If you don't have a Kindle, download the app onto your phone or tablet, but not a laptop. You could also print it out). As your mind has been consumed with marketing (and possibly cleaning the house for the first time since you started writing), you can read with slightly fresher eyes and hopefully catch those few typos that make it through 80 reads, 20 people, and every grammar software program known to man.
- What to put in your countdown – First, get all your content together. If this is not something you've done before, set aside a few days. Find a social media scheduling platform that is best for you. Popular choices are Canva and Mailchimp, but you can also do it through your website provider.
- When you get closer to completion, do a countdown to a cover reveal.
- Mock-ups – If you created a media pack, you'll have these ready to go.
- You want to be posting something every day. You've been posting photos of your book in nice places, but now is the time to add some content. Use an advanced/proofing copy of your book and take it out and about, adding captions such as, 'This is the park that inspired my favourite twist in the book. I can't wait to see what you think about my sneakiness.' As part of taking your readers along for your writing journey, take a photo of you holding your book in front of a quaint café. 'The café where I wrote The End'. If you haven't got a copy of your book yet, still take the photos and then use either Canva or Photoshop to add in the mock-up you created. (If you created a media pack, you will have mock-ups for this. If you didn't, [click here](#) for websites that will create mock-ups)
- Do box openings of your author copies.
- Early reviews next to a mock-up of your book with the release date.
- This is the time to get creative with your content. Make videos, or just use a picture and add a snippet from your book to entice the reader to pre-order. Keep this going long after the book is published.
- Research!!! Stay active on social media. All those writers out there that you've been following can give you ideas for content. Use the spreadsheet you have already created and schedule all these ideas for different content.





Book Launch

- By this point, you will have received reviews from your ARC readers, which will support your launch.
- You want to be distributing these reviews across social media on the day of your launch. They are the sales pitch!
- If this is your second book, run a [free promotion](#) on the first.
- Add the first chapter of your second book at the end of the first to entice them in to buying the next in the series.
- How about a launch party? Most new writers will think that this is only something established or traditional authors should do. This is not correct. You will need to spend money on this, but the benefit can be incredible. Who do you invite? Everyone. Spend some money on wine and cheese and invite book bloggers in your area/ Avid bookstagrammers/tokers. Remember, they are always looking for content and attending a book launch adds to their credibility. You will also be surprised how many will turn up for free wine and cheese, then feel obliged to buy the book.
- A book launch review team – These are readers who are not friends and family and have agreed to post a review on release day. The best way to gather this team is to connect with other writers. What they will do for you, you can do for them.

QR Codes

- QR codes are quick, easy and accessible. All your potential readers need to do is point and click, and instantly, they are taken to either your website or a site selling your book. They are free to create and can also save you money. As mentioned above, when creating a website, you are given the option to have a free site, but this will come with the creator's address added to it. I.e., Wix, GoDaddy, but the whole reason you are creating a website is to give yourself credibility as a professional writer and having this as part of your address mitigates that. With a QR code, you can direct readers to a website without giving them the address. So, unless they inspect the address when they arrive at your site, the free part of your web address is hidden.
- Creating a QR code is easy, and you have a couple of options. You can either click on the 3 dots on the right-hand side of the web browser, select 'Cast, Save, and Share', then select 'QR Code', or if you want to personalize the code, try <https://kindlepreneur.com/qr-code-generator-for-authors/>. Here you can change the color to suit your brand colours and even add a picture of your book or anything else you want to go in the middle.



- When and where can you use a QR code? Everywhere! One of the best (and cheapest) marketing tools I have seen (away from social media) is bookmarks. I have yet to meet any reader who won't happily accept a bookmark. Take them everywhere with you because these bookmarks have just become your new business cards.



- How to create a bookmark – Canva is probably the easiest (free) tool for creating a bookmark. You can select the bookmark design, and it will give you a 2x6 blank canvas. From there, Canva will suggest a design, or you can upload your own.
- Where to get bookmarks printed - Although you can get them done through sites like Vistaprint and Canva, it's a good opportunity to support a local business. Give a local printer a call! You're likely to get a couple of hundred for the price of a few cups of coffee.
- Where to hand out bookmarks? The easier question would be where not to hand them out. Most local businesses understand the need to market as cheaply as possible and will allow you to leave a few on the counter. Any and every book convention. Just wander around and hand them out. People reading in the park. Offer one with a smile, and they will likely take it with a smile. Leave a few in the doctor's and dentist's waiting rooms. If you're feeling brave, take a stroll around the high street bookshops, and if someone is looking at a book in a similar genre to yours, offer them a bookmark. (You may get asked to leave, but as an indie author, you will probably buy your books from your local indie bookshop anyway.) Give them to friends and family to distribute at work, on play dates, and to their friends and family. Get creative, and no matter where you go, look around and ask yourself, 'Is there a potential reader here?'
- Aside from bookmarks, you can put QR codes on t-shirts and displays at your signings. I even know a writer who got a car sticker with one on. Using the fact that her car was always muddy, the caption above the QR code said, 'If you want to know exactly how dirty I am, scan.'





Post-launch Social Media

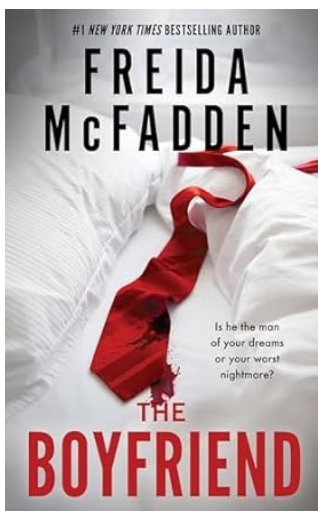
- Think out of the box. Perhaps something like a video of you sneaking your book into a book charity shop.
- Share your reviews, and yes, include your 1 stars. Don't rant! Humour is generally the best option. I.e., Reviewer – '1 Star. I just felt he was making it up as he went along.' Writer – (social media headline) – 'Well, mate, I hate to tell you this, but...'
- If a reader on Facebook asks for recommendations for a book in your genre, promote it! You would have created all this amazing visual material for your book blog tour, make sure you keep using it.
- Get in touch with your local bookshops. For most independent bookshops, your book will need to be set in the local area to them. There are now bookshops that only stock independent authors. One such is Book Dragon <https://www.thebookdragon.co.uk/>

Author Central - Amazon

- Don't overlook this when you are creating your social media plan.
- Your author name is below the title on your Amazon book page and can be linked to an author page. Here, you can add a bio and picture. Unlike some of your social media, you want to keep this purely professional. You'd be surprised how many readers will click on this page. It's the fastest way to find your other books.
- If you have decided to use a free website or not use one at all, your Author Central can help you. Direct readers here to follow you (Amazon will display your followers once you get over 20). They can then be kept informed of all promotions, pre-orders, and new releases.

A+ Content – Amazon

- Adding A+ content is a great way of offering your readers something visual. You can display quotes from the book. You cannot add reviews and endorsements can only be added if from a reputable publication or public figure. (Notice the consistency in branding with the example below.)





Free Promotion – Amazon

- No one wants to give their book away for free, but if you don't have a massive readership, it's a great way of building one up. Amazon will allow you to place your book as free for 5 days every 3 months. One of the main advantages is to get early reviews. Reviews not only encourage other readers to buy, but all these reviews can give you material to extend your media pack and promotional material.
- You can set up this free promotion by going to your KDP page and selecting Marketing.
- Don't forget to use these days to go mad with social media promotions. Don't just post content to your page, get on the reader groups and make sure everyone looking for your genre knows it's up for free. This includes TikTok.

Goodreads

- Do not underestimate the power of Goodreads. You are likely to get more people reviewing your books on Goodreads than you are on Amazon. Readers on Goodreads are there for this very reason.
- As a writer, you will also be a reader. Keep your Read List up to date and interact with other readers. Make friends!
- Make sure you join the Author Program. <https://help.goodreads.com/s/article/How-Do-I-Join-the-Author-Program-1550590077774>
- Goodreads is owned by Amazon. One of the perks here is that your Goodreads reviews will appear on the Amazon listing.
- For an in-depth explanation of what can be done with Goodreads, Dave's got some tips. <https://kindlepreneur.com/how-to-use-goodreads-for-authors/>
- How to use Goodreads to get reviews – (Note – Groups come and go, but below are examples of what to look out for.)
Goodreads ARC of Authors - <https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/93438-arc-of-authors>
- Goodreads Advanced Copies for Review & Book Giveaways - <https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/58575-advanced-copies-for-review-book-giveaways>
- Goodreads Read 4 Review - <https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/96918-read-4-review>
- Goodreads FREE BOOKS for Book lovers: ARC & Polished Manuscript Readers for Authors - <https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/205386-free-books-for-book-lovers-arc-polished-manuscript-readers-for-author>
- Goodreads Authors & Reviewers - <https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/103713-authors-reviewers>
- Goodreads Book Review Club - <https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/71494-book-review-club>

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My last piece of advice – Try new things, and make sure that at least once a month, you are researching to find new and unusual ways to promote your books. If you have read through this guide and realized that you are not the type of person who can put themselves out there, consider a pen name and find your confidence from the anonymity this offers.

