

Discover your audience.

You know who you want to target, but the question you now need to ask is, “Do these people exist?” The answer is not always as obvious as it seems; groups of people who are interested in content don’t necessarily always look the same from the outside. There are three sorts of potential audiences for books: The Absent Audience, The Gathered Audience, and The Invisible Audience.

THE ABSENT AUDIENCE

The most common target audience is The Absent Audience. Absent Audiences are groups of people who are actively looking for the content that doesn’t exist. These groups know what they want, but for whatever reason are unable to find an outlet that provides specifically what they want. Perhaps the current options are missing content, have a poor presentation, high price, and so on, or it could be that there simply isn’t any information available.

Cut the crap.

It's a hard reality for a lot of authors, but it's true: some things related to your topic just don't belong in your book. I know, I know, so many more people would read if you were to just include this one little treatise on this or that, but that's just the little Scope Creep Devil on your shoulder telling you lies again. If it doesn't fit into the materials you created using the first section of this book, then ditch it.



PROTIP Don't be afraid to make cuts. Your readers and your fingers will thank you for it.

You need to be ruthless when it comes to cutting things. Cutthroat, even. Anything that doesn't 100% fit in with your book is only serving to distract your readers from what you're actually saying, and those distractions suck for you because it impacts your message and suck for your readers since it's now more difficult for them to navigate the content of your book. The best way to make these cuts is just to do it without thinking. Rip it out like you rip off a band-aid. You can always add things back in later if you feel like they truly belong there, and recovering any removed text should be as easy as pulling an old revision out of source control and grabbing the text (you are using source control of some variety, aren't you?).

As you keep making cuts, adding things back in, refactoring, and so on, the good stuff will bubble to the top and the bad stuff will end up on the editing room floor. Good riddance.

Build a new network.

Once you start getting eyes on your book, you want them to stay there. You'll want to start building a community and network around the book itself. You don't want people just taking a look around your marketing materials or blog and leaving; you want to be able to interact with them and contact them. You want to be able to answer their questions and see what they're interested in. You want to build a "new" network from these people.

The lowest friction way to start building a network is to setup a Twitter account just for your book. Get as many people from your current Twitter follower list to jump on board and then start producing content to get others interested. For example, you might...

- Sprinkle a few links related to your book into your feed every day
- Setup Twitter searches and start conversations with others through the results
- Link to your blog posts about your book and surrounding content
- Engage in discussions with others about your book's topic