

Web Serial Toolbox Reference Sheet
by Cecilia Tan, author of award-winning web serial *Daron's Guitar Chronicles*

Web serial/web fiction: "(Also known as "Webfiction" or the "Online novel") is the prose equivalent of [webcomics](#) such as *Sluggy Freelance* or *Girl Genius* (among many others) which... have distinct **Story Arcs**. An author, usually an amateur, publishes a **Novel** in many short installments (often daily or weekly) on a website."

(Definition from TV Tropes: <http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/WebSerialNovel>)

Another definition (mine): "The online text-fiction equivalent of serial storytelling forms such as television shows, comic books, or soap operas."

Hosting your serial:

- Blogspot
- Wordpress.com
- Livejournal
- Wattpad
- Juke Pop Serials
- Digital Novelists (may be defunct?)
- self-hosting (your own machine or using Bluehost, GoDaddy, or other 3rd party platform hosting: *check TOS first!* Watch out for rights grabs, obscenity clauses, etc)
- OR SOME *COMBINATION* THEREOF

Elements a serial website must have:

- your copyright notice
- a way to post chapters and easily navigate forward and backward through them (Next/Previous buttons or links, clickable table of contents)
- about the author info
- "about your serial" landing page or start page: like the back of a book, it tells what it is
- donate button or way for fans to contribute and/or contact you
- ability for readers to comment (some consider this optional: I consider it crucial!)

Optional elements:

- digital product shopping cart (like WP-Estore for Word Press or ZenCart)
- ability to place advertisements on the site
- social networking for readers (i.e. they can "friend" each other, WP has plugins for this)

Promoting your serial:

Listings & directories:

- TuesdaySerial.com - add new listing every week & also promo news, book tie ins, arcs ending etc
 - Web Fiction Guide (<http://webfictionguide.com/>) - list once in this directory
 - Top Web Fiction (<http://topwebfiction.com/>) - list once, fans vote every week
 - Muses Success (<http://muses-success.info/>) - list once in this directory
 - EpiGuide (<http://www.epiguide.com/forums/>) - online forums for all web entertainment
- EpiGuide hosts WeSeWriMo every August, hosts a podcast, takes paid advertising, has resources page

Advertising:

- Project Wonderful -- as cheap as you want them to be
- Facebook ads -- as cheap as you want them to be

Social Media:

IF YOU DON'T SEND OUT NOTIFICATION EACH CHAPTER, YOU WON'T GET AS MUCH TRAFFIC

-Automate your social media announcements of new content:

- use IF This THEN That (IFTTT.com) to configure triggers/actions
- Wordpress plugins and crossposters to Twitter/FB/etc

Twitter - Facebook (personal page and pro page) - Tumblr - LJ - Instagram/Pinterest(if visual?) - G+ - Ello? Tsu? - whatever social media network comes next

- build up a network of followers, make sure you have links on your site that direct people to your social media -- this network will grow slowly but be crucial to success

- engagement on social media: "Text Art" memes, cospasta, fan retweets, character accounts

Nonfiction blog separate from the fiction itself (which will RSS To:)

- Goodreads author page
- Amazon author page

Email List: MailChimp (free), Aweber (\$10 per month), Constant Contact

-Very important to have a way to reach readers that YOU own, not Facebook/Twitter, etc

Other ways to spread the word:

-Blog tours and exchanges with other web serial writers

-Wattpad -- use Wattpad like a social media site for most effect

-Goodreads forums (like <https://www.goodreads.com/group/show/22783-web-serial-fiction>)

-Free ebook at Amazon & Smashwords (highly recommended!) "permafree"

- free ebook newsletters and ad sites (BookBub is the 900 lb gorilla, many smaller, free, cheap)
<http://www.rachelleayala.com/p/promo-sites.html>
<https://ruthnestvold.wordpress.com/2015/02/10/starting-out-as-an-indie-author-where-to-promote-permafree-books/>

Revenue Streams:

-Paypal donate button

-Patreon - subscription payments, kind of like an ongoing Kickstarter

-Merch on your site: T-shirts, stickers, automatic downloads

-Merch on 3rd party site: ongoing: Zazzle, CafePress | limited time: TeeSpring, Booster

-Subsidiary products sold elsewhere: i.e. ebooks sold on Amazon, audiobooks sold on Audible

-Periodic Kickstarter or crowdfund (IndieGogo, etc) campaigns (like NPR's annual fundraiser)

-Advertising: Google AdWords, Project Wonderful, LinkAds, BlogAds, etc. (ADS TRADITIONALLY DON'T GET MUCH UNTIL YR TRAFFIC IS HUGE)

-Juke Pop Serials supposedly pays creators for traffic - I haven't verified how/if it works yet, though

Reader Engagement:

-CALL TO ACTION AT THE BOTTOM OF EVERY POST (or once a week?)

-comments (as yourself? as a character? both?)

-rewards (offer bonus content for various forms of engagement: donations, comments, help, linking)

-polls

-fanfic or fanart bounty or contests

-other contests

-reader forum/chat room

-convention appearances