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Finding Your Online Screenwriting Community

This Community Guide surveys key online gateways where new writers can form lateral relationships with other emerging writers, as well as develop their brand in the public eye using social media.

🕒 7 MIN READ 📅 MARCH 12, 2020

New screenwriters often begin their journey in the belief that solitude is a necessary, even desirable creative condition. Ironically, this impression often comes from the medium itself, where screenwriters are frequently depicted as neurotic, socially awkward and self-isolating.

The reality is that no one gets ahead without help, and the best help comes in the form of community. Screenwriters often do the bulk of their writing by themselves, but they succeed with the help of their networks. There are more aspirational screenwriters than ever before, and all of them are in search of communities where they can network, exchange notes, discuss the industry, and develop relationships.

This Community Guide surveys key community gateways where new writers can form lateral relationships with other emerging writers, as well as develop their brand in the public eye on social media.

r/Screenwriting

The r/Screenwriting subreddit on Reddit.com boasts the largest number of subscribers, topping half a million members and growing every day.

R/Screenwriting is also one of the oldest communities and includes an ever-increasing number of industry professionals.

As a new writer, r/Screenwriting is likely to be one of your first stops. In addition to acting as a clearinghouse for other communities, it provides broad creative and social support for its users.

The r/ Screenwriting community is best for:

- ❑ **News** – catch up with popular interest items.
- ❑ **Advice** – wikis and user comments will help point you in the right direction.
- ❑ **Feedback** – members will give you their opinions about your material.
- ❑ **Service reviews** – thinking about getting paid coverage or entering the blkclst? Get the lowdown from others.
- ❑ **Requesting scripts** – get help locating produced scripts for educational reading.
- ❑ **Real-world events** – find out about meet-and-greets and regional writing groups.
- ❑ **AMAs** – Ask Me Anything – the real gem in the r/Screenwriting crown. Be present for live Q&As with famous screenwriters or industry professionals.

r/Screenwriting is an invaluable resource for anyone wanting to get their feet wet, though like any online platform, it does suffer from a few drawbacks: it is a populist format, which means appealing content sometimes outperforms quality content. It is also an extremely large worldwide community, which can make it difficult to form relationships or connect with individual writers.

Screenwriters Network Discord Server

Discord is a chat platform originally developed for gamers, but has expanded into all forms of cooperative, interactive communities. Screenwriters Network

was created by [Alison Parker](#) (Smish) in order to facilitate real-time community. Her moderated server of over 5,000 users is far more intimate, providing screenwriters with social participation they might not find elsewhere.

Screenwriters Network Discord is the place to go for:

- ❑ **Real-time connection** – lively conversation, gossip, and friendly interaction.
- ❑ **Feedback relationships** – reciprocity is the name of the note-giving game.
- ❑ **Weekly events and internal contests** – the SND promotes scripts, holds [logline](#) contests and other voluntary events.
- ❑ **Script Hub** – a library of educational material.
- ❑ **Writers groups** – smaller private sub-groups that accept members based on specific criteria.
- ❑ **Live Table Reads** – SND holds biweekly live table reads over voice chat, where volunteer members read screenplays out loud and offer feedback, an incredibly beneficial community experience difficult to find elsewhere.

The Screenwriters Network Discord Server is a very closely monitored community, and participation requires a certain amount of perception. It can be intimidating for a new user to integrate into this established community, but provided you follow the rules, don't saturate the chat, and take cues from the veterans, the server can be incredibly rewarding.

Twitter

Twitter presents some interesting opportunities for new writers. On one hand, it can seem as though professional name screenwriters are easier to access. On the other, that impression has the potential to be disabused either by the conduct or attitude of the writer in question, or the reality that many writers are on Twitter in order to socialize with their peers, not answer questions.

Your best strategy as a new writer on Twitter is to network horizontally. "Writer Twitter", an informal and diverse network of cross-discipline writers actively promotes projects along network lines. Note that there is a lot of cross-over

from places like Discord and Reddit – this is a great starting point if you’re new to the network.

The best way to use Twitter:

- ❑ **Hashtags** – Learn how to use hashtags. [#amwriting](#) is a common example of one that will lead you straight to people who count themselves as part of the network.
- ❑ **Follows** – Follow people whose tweets and content you respect, and see who they follow. Follow people who follow you back- within reason.
- ❑ **Donate your time** – Reach out and offer feedback to people requesting reads.
- ❑ **Brand yourself** – Have a portfolio listed on your profile.

Real World

The dreaded real world. If you’re a writer who is serious about making a career for yourself, you need to know how to network. This doesn’t necessarily mean you need to glad-hand your way through a crowd – instead, look for social situations that offer creative motivation and advancement. Some good options:

- ❑ **Meetup.com** – writers groups all over the world post to this site. There are groups that meet to write together, and groups that meet to provide each other with feedback.
- ❑ **University Clubs** – many universities and colleges have informal screenwriting clubs or societies – many of which have public membership. If you’re already in school, this can be a great option for you, especially if you’re not able to study screenplay.
- ❑ **Classes** – A screenwriting class is an investment, but it also provides a highly structured environment that will help you develop the template for all future community interaction. There are a lot of affordable, aid-eligible community college screenplay classes, and they can provide you with an advance education in a how-to workshop with a group.

- ❑ **Film Festivals** – All major film festivals rely on hundreds of volunteers, often rewarding them with ticket credits and special screenings. Get work experience, exposure to film culture, and make some friends. Leave your screenplay at home, but give out your twitter and business card.
- ❑ **Podcast Live Shows** – [Scriptnotes](#) is the gold-standard screenplay podcast, [but is by no means the only one](#). Ask your communities what they're listening to, look for local offerings, and connect with others who share your common interest. Podcast live shows are growing in popularity, and can give you an opportunity to meet fellow travelers.

A Word About Adjacent Communities

For the purpose of this guide, adjacent community refers to any online community that is built specifically to complement a for-profit entity. These are not bad communities, but it's important to be aware that pay-for-play services like the [blcklst](#) or [ScreenCraft](#) are not inherently community-driven. It might be advantageous to be a member of these communities, but a writer should consider that investment on a return from that service rather than a place to go looking for friends.

To that end, there are official and unofficial service communities on Facebook and elsewhere.

Best Practices – How to Be a Good Community Member

- ❑ Know the rules and follow them. Ask for help when you need it.
- ❑ Don't try to force relationships with established members – start small.
- ❑ Approach professionals with respect and remember: you're not entitled to anyone's attention.
- ❑ The greatest thing you'll ever learn is to read and to be read in return. Nothing makes a better first impression than donating your time to someone else's work. Do favors, then graduate to swaps.
- ❑ Behave yourself. Be kind, empathetic and patient, and people will take your decency for granted. Get a reputation as a bully or a nag, and your

community experience will be sub-optimal.

- ❑ Relax. Everyone's striving for the same goal, and it's not easy, but the process is better in the company of people who understand and sympathize with what you're trying to accomplish.

Community can mean the difference between failure and success, whether it's cheerleading you all the way to the Austin semi-finals, or helping someone get to the end of their first draft. The best reward comes from being counted, and the best way to achieve that is by committing your support to your fellow writers.

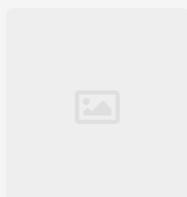
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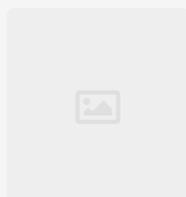
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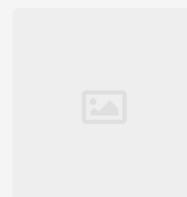
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