

Scribd

Marketing Basics



Scribd Marketing Basics

You hadn't really been aware of Scribd until this report caught your eye. If that's the case, you're probably asking yourself: "Yet *another* social network I have to subscribe to?"

Well, not exactly...

Scribd is more than a social network: It's primarily an **online publishing site and library**, with many social networking properties and hallmarks added as side benefits.

How Do You Pronounce "Scribd"?

Before you get into too much of a habit saying "Scribed", let me vault you up into the elite inner circle: Those who know it's actually pronounced: "Scri**bd**".

What Does It Do – and Why Should I Care?

Even if you don't really know anything about Scribd at all, you're probably aware of its most famous fact: That it started in San Francisco, March 2007, and now calls itself "the largest social publishing company in the world", claiming over 50 million readers every month, with more than 50,000 new documents uploaded by users every day, according to [The Guardian](#).

You can upload and download any kind of written documents, including (but not limited to):

- Essays
- White papers
- Fiction
- Recipes
- Memoirs
- Résumés
- Manuals

“YouTube” for Documents?

The best description of Scribd I’ve seen on the net is “YouTube for documents”. Make no mistake, however: Although it’s doing everything it can to be user-driven, this is no grassroots, people-friendly company. Millions of dollars of seed money and investment have been regularly fed into this company since its inception, and it is following a highly deliberate strategy and plan. Its stated goal as of November 2009 is to increase the number of books it publishes yearly from 300,000 to 3 million. Scribd may have only 23 listed employees¹ but each name individually brings a high-powered corporate background and skill base to the table.

Top commercial authors compete with Mainstream and online publishing companies such as Wiley (the “for Dummies” series) and Random House. Lonely Planet and Lulu.com have also teamed up with Scribd, with more being added daily.

¹ <http://www.crunchbase.com/company/scribd>

In short, more “famous names” are adding their **backlinks** and **credibility** daily.

7 Top Reasons for Waking Up to Scribd

There are some crucial restrictions internet marketers and particularly affiliate marketers need to know about – but there are also 7 powerful reasons to sit up and pay attention to this until-now largely overlooked social network, for anyone in online business:

- 1.** Scribd is going Mobile/is Mobile friendly
- 2.** Scribd has an online store – where you can sell your works (not just share them)
- 3.** You can link your Scribd account instantly with other social networking platforms, such as **Facebook** and **Twitter**
- 4.** You can (or will very shortly be able to) read Amazon Kindle documents via Scribd’s all-purpose reader
- 5.** You can create powerful, valid backlinks simply by having content on (or even just using) Scribd
- 6.** You can use it like an article marketing directory – **without having to wait for approval**
- 7.** Supports multiple file formats, including .PDF, MS Word, PowerPoint and Excel

Scribd also has its own API, which is good news for developers.

What is an "API"? API stands for "Application Programming Interface" – allows other software to interact with it via protocols and programming routines.

APIs require a "key", which once bestowed, allows other software to interact.

The advantage with API's? Software developers can access the actual existing structure to write original new programs for it, saving time and money for all.

In October 2009, it added its own "Branded Document Reader for Media Companies", which created quite a buzz in the publishing and business world.

A Little Competition goes a Long Way

Scribd is also giving mega-giants Google and Amazon a run for their money. Why is that good for you?

While there are advantages to having your works searchable by Google and for sale in Amazon, you may be found there only by people already on your list, who know about your products. Depending on your niche, and how well you've optimized your products, they can easily get dwarfed in such vast marketplaces, making the chances of organic searchers finding them extremely problematic – and your chances of creating a "buzz" about them nil!

And since much eBook reading takes place on mobile devices nowadays, it's always a good idea to make sure your products are searchable the way people usually find eBooks on mobile devices: Not through clever search algorithms, but through word-of-mobile recommendations.

In other words, mobile users find your products most often through social networks, which is how Scribd operates.

How Do I Use It?

If you are planning to upload works yourself, there is only one main requirement listed: Your document must be **completely original** (created by you).

Scribd's iPaper documents are streamed directly from their data center, so a high speed connection is necessary. Adobe Flash and a JavaScript-enabled browser are also a requirement.

Beyond that, there is no special reader you're forced to buy and, as mentioned earlier, you will be able to view multiple file formats, including PowerPoint slideshows. The Scribd service is **free to use**, which makes it an excellent source for research – particularly of the quirky and original. (The only time you ever have to pay is if you're downloading a document already in its online store. In that case, you'll see a "Buy Now" button.)

The beauty of Scribd is that you are free to utilize it in any way you see fit, as long as you are not spamming according to Scribd's definitions. Keep in mind that it is looking for **original, high quality content** and that it does not primarily operate using Google's algorithms, but rather by how well your document catches on socially and creates a buzz on its "Explore" pages, and you will be on the right track.

In other words, you can upload anything, as long as it's interesting and unique enough. Two examples, in point:

A French language instruction primer called *"Merde, Genevieve! - The Real French you were Never Taught at School"*². With a catchy cartoon cover, simple and witty delivery, this book contains real French slang (including mild swear words). In spite of its content, it does not violate Scribd's terms – particularly what it calls "Mom's Golden Rule", that of treating other members of Scribd's community the way you'd like your own mother treated. As a result, it quickly rose to be a product suggested at random, through its popularity.

Another current random hit is a simple article by a woman named Alice Sheba³ who wrote an account of a first date she had with famed writer, J. D. Salinger, in 1946. If you search for her name, there are now over 220,000 results, half of which are actually relevant.

² Also known as "Dirty French"

³ NB: not "Seba"!

Scribd Mobile

This “whatever catches popular interest” approach extends to Scribd’s Mobile library too. For example, just randomly exploring it instantly netted “101 Valentine Ideas” and “Valentine Recipes 2009”. So adding content tied to specific occasions and holidays would be an excellent strategy, greatly upping your chances of seeing your content featured in its “Trending” section.

One of the best features of Scribd – whether you are sharing online documents, mobile documents or uploading an eBook to their store? You are allowed to include “in-text” links and graphics, which sets it ahead of the crowd, if you’re planning to use it for self-promotion or article marketing. You can also create certain types of advertisements too – but with both these activities, be sure to follow their guidelines!

Scribd’s Online Store

There are 3 crucial factors you need to know about their online store:

- It is strictly for U.S. residents at this time
- It takes a 20% commission, plus a transaction fee of .25 cents per download (.40 cents, if you formatted your document with DRM software or technology)
- It does not support PayPal as a payment method

Apart from that, it is ridiculously easy to upload any document in your favorite format. (You can even include a graphic Cover Page, if you simply make it the first page of your document).

Drawbacks, Anyone?

Every system has its fine print, and if you are engaged in affiliate marketing, you will definitely need to check their FAQs, since they have stringent controls on “spamming”.

Scribd Categories

... are very broad. They include

- **Books**
- **Brochures & Catalogs**
- **Business & Law**
- **Creative Writing**
- **Government Docs**
- **How-to-Guides & Manuals**
- **Illustrations & Maps**
- **Magazines & Newspapers**
- **Presentations & Slideshows**
- **Puzzles & Games**
- **Recipes & Menus**
- **Research**
- **Resumes & CVs**
- **School Work**
- **Spreadsheets**

...as well as a helpful “Trending” button.

Just make sure that your plug-ins and browser security settings allow Scribd.com traffic

Scribd's mission (which it takes a little too zealously at times, according to J. K. Rowling and her lawyers) is "to liberate the written word". It's a fairly new social platform, and although it has millions of users, it still hasn't become as widespread a vehicle as Facebook or even Twitter in internet marketing circles. But its Alexa and Quantcast stats are impressive.

The best way to make a name for yourself is to set yourself ahead of the pack and anticipate trends. Those able to anticipate end up as leaders. It's as simple as that.

Now go explore [Scribd](#) and discover all its possibilities for yourself!