

CALAMARI!



The Official Squidoo How To

by Megan Casey and Seth Godin, original squids

first edition, June, 2008



**We wrote a book. This is it. It's free and it's official
and it will tell you what you need to get started right now.**

Squidoo is a free web service that lets you build a web page about anything you're fascinated with
or interested in
or good at.

Squidoo is a free web service that lets you send traffic to your blog
or your corporate website
or to sites that deserve our attention.

WHAT ARE [YOU](#) INTERESTED IN?



Squidoo goes beyond being free. Every day, the pages you build in Squidoo *earn money for charity*. Or, if you like, you can change the settings to *earn money for yourself*.

Some of our users earn more than a thousand dollars a month.
Some of our users have donated more than \$5,000 to charity.

Most of all, **Squidoo** is a community. We have more than 200,000 members who not only build pages, but communicate with each other,

support each other,
teach each other
and just plain *hang out*.

This is a short manual that will show you, step by step, how to start using Squidoo and will point you to the best resources to get really good at it.

You can't make a big mistake.

You can't mess up.

And you just might discover new ideas, new revenue and new friends.

And yes, you can do it in just a few minutes a day
(<http://www.squidoo.com/twentyminutelens>)

**Hey. You don't have to read this whole ebook.
You could just visit this page and poke around instead!**

<http://www.squidoo.com/whybuildalens>



PART I: How to think about Squidoo

The web is a very cluttered place. There are tens of billions of websites. Lots of them have useful information, many of them don't. Finding your way through the haystack of the web is frustrating.

- Web searches often end in failure.
- Shopping expeditions lead to empty online shopping carts.
- Connections are left unmade.

In a world filled with six billion people, there's almost certainly someone out there who can help you, teach you, encourage you, point out great stuff or entertain you. But if you can't find them, they're invisible.

Squidoo makes it easy for people with something to say to become invisible.

You don't have to be the world's expert on something to use Squidoo.

You just have to care.

If you care about something, whether it's laptop bags or Michelangelo's David or the debate over gun control, Squidoo gives you a platform. You can use that platform to:

- Host a debate
- Lead a tribe of like-minded people
- Point out great stuff to buy from Amazon or eBay
- Build trust
- Make a point
- Curate a bunch of videos

Squidoo is a cross between wikipedia, a blog, about.com and a custom YouTube channel. Squidoo makes it easy (and free) (and fast) to post information and links and debates online. Squidoo also makes it easy (and fun) for you to build the trust of people looking for a leader, and Squidoo makes it easy to drive traffic to your eBay auction or corporate website. And yes, with hundreds of thousands of dollars raised so far, Squidoo makes it easy to raise money for a charity you care about (or to earn folding money for yourself).

In the next section, I'll explain the business and people behind Squidoo, but while you're waiting to turn the page, here are three Squidoo lenses (that's what we call our pages) that you can take a look at. Each is a masterpiece in its own way, each demonstrates the power of Squidoo. Go ahead and click, I'll wait.

<http://www.squidoo.com/doghealthmedicines>

<http://www.squidoo.com/squidoo-for-dummies>

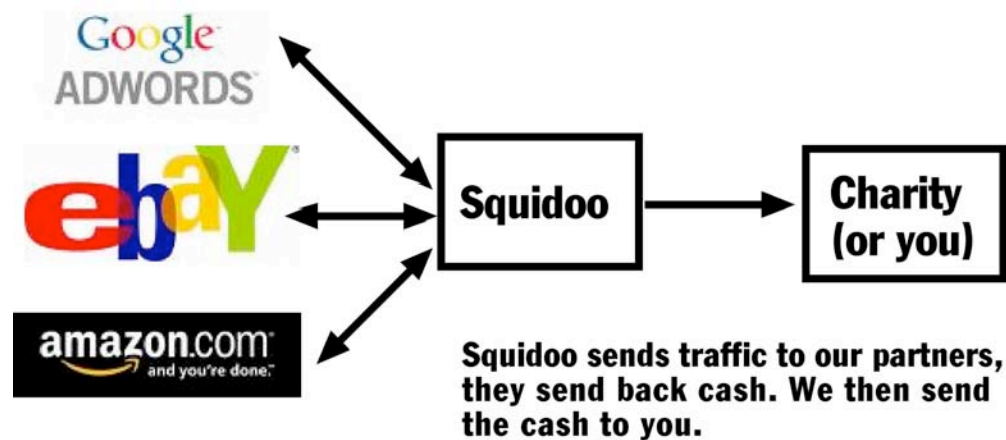
<http://www.squidoo.com/wordpress-vs-blogger>



PART II: How the business end of Squidoo works

Before you spend a lot of time and energy building pages on Squidoo, a brief explanation of how squidoo.com makes money and why we do what we do.

Squidoo gets paid by Amazon and eBay and Google and Glam to post links and to run ads. This is a model that's been around for years, but Squidoo was one of the very first sites to bring all these affiliate programs together in an easy-to-use way. (Affiliate program: a deal where an online store, like Amazon, pays a commission to sites that refer people who buy stuff. Simple example: When you buy a book you read about on a blog, Amazon probably pays that blogger thirty or fifty cents for the referral. The more that gets sold, the more they pay).



The Google and Glam ads are usually relevant to what you're writing about, and the affiliate links to Amazon and eBay and other sites are chosen by you. Google uses its software to read the content of your site and then automatically chooses ads that match the content. If someone clicks on the ad, Google charges the advertiser a fee (it might be as much as \$100 a click

but it's probably closer to \$3). Google then pays us a commission, and we pay you. The ads appear automatically, but the Amazon and eBay links are up to you. You can add as many of them to your page as you like.

When someone clicks on an ad or buys a product from one of our pages, Squidoo gets paid. Not much, but when you have half a million pages, it adds up. A good page might make a nickel, a dime or a dollar a day. If you have a lot of these pages, you can see how it can really pay off.

We take 5% of the money we get and send it to charity. We take 50% of what we get and send it to you (or to the charity you choose). We spend the other 45% to pay our expenses and to hire dancing monkeys to come and perform at our company holiday party.

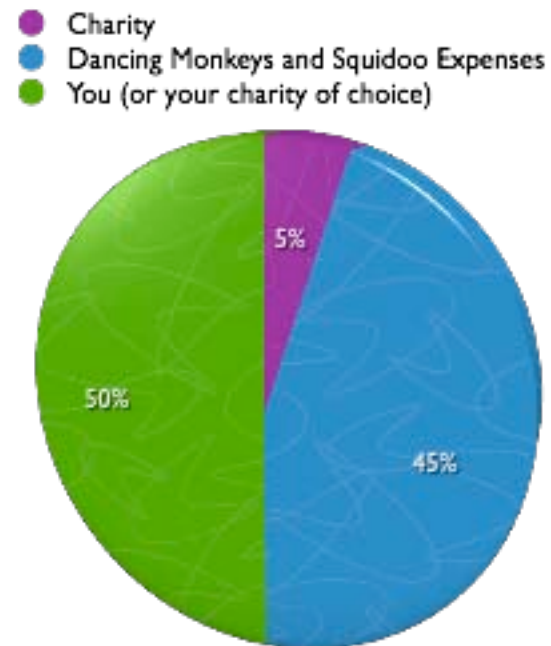
You can read all about our payment policies and stuff right here: (<http://www.squidoo.com/pages/paymenthelp>)

Don't take our word for it, though. Here are links to non-profits that are delighted at all the money we send them, and links to our users saying happy things about us:

<http://www.squidoo.com/pages/getdonations>

<http://www.squidoo.com/pages/nonprofitpartners>.

So far, Squidoo has funded schools and libraries being built in Nepal, pet shelters in Ohio, juvenile diabetes research coordinated in New York and a gym for underprivileged kids in New Jersey. If you'd like to support a specific charity, we'll make it easy for you to do that.



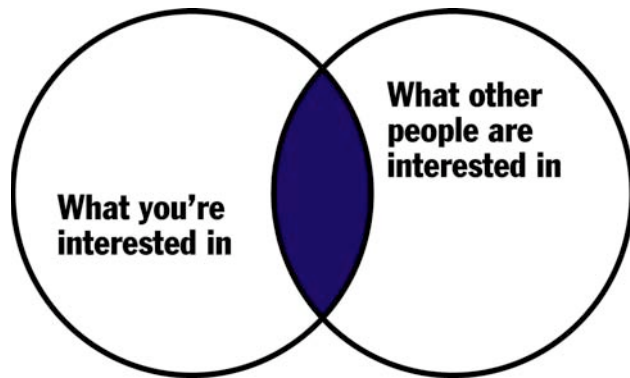


PART III: Let's get started

There are two ways to get started with Squidoo. The first is to look at really good lenses and see where you're headed. With a little practice, there's no reason your lenses can't be as good as those. There's a free ebook about the best lenses that you can get right here: cobrand.squidoo.com/ebooks/uuuEbook.pdf

Turn the page for the next way...

The second and more useful way to start is to think about this graph:



It's that sweet spot in between the two circles where you can really thrive. It turns out that every single day, millions (millions!) of people do a Google search for Webkinz. If you love Webkinz and have something to say, or something to teach or something to sell related to Webkinz, then this is a great category for you. Hey, you could even build a great place for people who hate Webkinz to come and hang out. Of course, you don't have to (and probably shouldn't) pick the most popular topic in the world. After all, that's a crowded market to grab your share of. Less popular areas might also be less

crowded, and in desperate need of your help. Civil War archeology, say, or tourist spots in Tampa. There are people who really want to talk about and learn about just about everything, and your passion can help them reach their goals.

On the other hand, if you're into knitting dog sweaters using lint from the dryer, perhaps you should broaden your interests just a bit.

The very best (and most successful) pages on Squidoo navigate this sweetspot beautifully. You can build a page about a single hotel in Paris, going into great detail. It won't be the most popular thing searched for online, but everyone who does search for it is sure to find you and be glad they did.

Or, you could build a page about a person you admire or respect. Right now, biographical pages online are in short supply, especially for people who aren't Time-magazine famous. The web is a big place, but if it's going to cover all the information that needs to get covered, it's going to get a lot bigger.

Over time, you'll get a better and better at building a page that represents that sweet spot, a lens that's useful, unique and updated and that manages to give people online something that they're looking hard for.

Here's what I'd like you to keep in mind as you read the rest of this booklet:

- You don't have to start with the perfect topic. You just have to start.
- Our very best lensmasters (that's what we call the people who build our pages) have dozens of lenses, not one perfect one. This isn't about being perfect, it's about doing it and learning as you go.

So start.



THE GOOD PART: The Squidoo Tutorial

NOTE! Squidoo keeps changing but this ebook can't. So, I built a Squidoo page (<http://www.squidoo.com/stepbystep>) that will show you, with screen shots, exactly what each and every step of building a lens looks like. Go ahead and read this section, then click on the stepbystep link and you can see all the updates in living color...

I'm going to teach you how to build a world-class page, and to do the first draft in less than fifteen minutes. Your second world-class lens might take even less time to get started, hard to tell. Sure, the greatest lenses take hours or even weeks of work, but we're going to start with something quite straightforward, a topic on which everyone has an opinion.

To get started with this tutorial, just answer this simple question: *What's your favorite kind of candy?*

This is a pretty trivial topic, but I'm picking it because it's universal and easy to understand. So, go ahead and answer the question and we'll build a lens together about it.

Throughout this tutorial, I'm going to assume you've got your web browser (Microsoft is fine, Firefox is even better, Safari works too) open and that you can either print out this booklet or have it handy on your screen.

Click here (<http://www.squidoo.com/wizard/step1>) and you'll start down the path of building a lens. First, we'll ask you to type in a name for your lens. Type:

Why I love [Baby Ruth]

(you should put whatever brand of candy you want [in place of the brackets]).

Now, you need to answer a few simple questions on the screen. The lens you're building is about food and cooking, so choose that category. Your lens needs an official web address (they call this a URL) so go ahead and compress your topic to something like BabyRuthCandy or IloveBabyRuth. Capital letters don't matter, use em if you want to. No spaces, though. Dashes are fine.

Your lens is family-friendly, so go ahead and choose "G-rated".

At this point, you have the world's simplest web page. It has a name and not much else.

Every single Squidoo page is made up of building blocks. We call each block a module. A module has a specific job. The Amazon module, for example, lets you list books for sale. The eBay module lets you find auctions and promote them (yours or someone else's). The Google Maps module lets you put up directions to a place or address. With hundreds of modules to choose from, there's a lot of power here, but it's really simple: *If you want to do something on your lens, add a module.*

Modules are like Lego building blocks. They fit together easily and every one does a different thing. When you don't need a feature, you can delete the module with one click (there's a little X in a circle) and when you want to add a feature, just add a module.

One more thing before we get into it: Every lens on Squidoo lives in two different states. There's the finished lens, which is what everyone sees (we call that a published lens) and there's the editing view, which allows you to add, delete, rearrange and edit your modules. After you're done editing a lens, you have to hit the PUBLISH button in order to tell Squidoo that you're done with your changes and you want to make them visible to everyone in the world. When you build a lens, you start in edit mode, and you stay there, changing and editing, until you hit publish. After that, you can hit the button that says VIEW THIS LENS" and you can see what everyone else will see. You can edit your lens as many times as you like... it's never done, always improving.

So, you have a page hardly worth building. What now?

For our candy lens, we're going to add the following modules:

Introduction (which is automatically included)

Links Plexo

Amazon Spotlight

eBay

YouTube

Duel

You can add them all at once at the module picker. (You'll find this when you hit ADD MODULES while editing a lens.)

Now that they're on the page, all you need to do is fill each one up with stuff. For a topic like Baby Ruth candy bars, this isn't particularly difficult.

In the Introduction module, hit the EDIT button. Now you can give this module a headline (type in **Why I Love Baby Ruth and You Should Too**). In the text box, type a little essay about your connection to candy bar. It doesn't have to be brilliant, but it does need to be original and real. Just a few sentences are fine, or you can go into tremendous detail about your Uncle Harold and his obsession with his candy bar collection and the terrible barn fire that took it all down with a blaze of caramel. It's all fine with us. Here's a possible example:

Before I got to America.. all these people I had met online and in person in Guam told me that their favorite candy bar was called the Baby Ruth... Imagine my surprise when I ate my first one. It was even better than I had



been led to believe. More chocolate, more nuts, more of everything I really like in a candy bar. On this lens, I want to share recipes and nostalgia and facts about my favorite candy bar.

When you're done writing this module, hit SAVE.

One last thing. Hit EDIT again and hit the tab that says TABLE OF CONTENTS. There's only one button to press there, one that turns on an automatic table feature. Turn that on and hit SAVE again.

There are other features in the intro module, like the discovery tool. You don't have to do anything at all to make these powerful tools work... but you can change the settings later if you don't like the way they work now.

Next up is the Links Plexo. Plexo is our name for a fancy technology that allows anyone visiting your lens to rank the links you've listed. It's sort of like digg or Reddit, but you get to be in charge of the way people use it. Digg is one of the most popular sites on the internet (check it out: <http://www.digg.com>). It lets people submit links and web sites and stories and vote

them up (or down) so that the most popular stories end up on top.

Plexo is our most complicated module, but to tell you the truth, it's pretty simple. Once you get the hang of this one, the rest will be easy.

So, for example, if you were building a lens about outdoor games, you could list three online ultimate frisbee sites:

<http://www.upa.org>

<http://whatisultimate.com>

<http://www.whamo.com>

and the people visiting your lens could vote the links up or down or even suggest their own. In this way, fans of a given topic get all the power of digg without the noise and distraction of sites about exploding Coke bottles, etc.

In the case of our Baby Ruth lens, we're going to list the following, along with a description of each link:

Baby Ruth in Wikipedia

You can get all the official facts right here.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baby_Ruth

Baby Ruth in your face animated commercial site

Awful stuff, if you ask me.

www.babyruth.com

Was the Baby Ruth candy bar named after Babe Ruth?

A good many people think that the Baby Ruth candy bar was named after Babe Ruth. I heard that it was named after the daughter of President Grover Cleveland. Here's one answer:

ask.yahoo.com/19990913.html

Buying Baby Ruth online

Baby Ruth, Wax Lips, Zagnuts, BB Bats, Wax Bottles, Sky Bars, Candy Cigarettes, Kits, Sugar Daddy and more fresh candies from the 50s, 60s and 70, ...

www.oldtimecandy.com/baby-ruth.htm

snopes.com: The truth about the name

Was the Baby Ruth candy bar named after Ruth Cleveland? ... Moreover, the notion that a candy bar called "Baby Ruth" should appear on the market just when a certain baseball player was breaking records...

www.snopes.com/business/names/babyruth.asp

The screenshot shows a web interface for managing a 'lens'. At the top, there are four tabs: 'My List', 'Sharing', 'Submissions', and 'Display'. The 'Submissions' tab is active. Below the tabs, there is a list of links. The first link is '#1 ReelSmart.com' with a subtext 'Apple has posted a dedicated web page for Adobe Cr' and a 'more...' link. To the right of this link are 'Edit' and 'Delete' buttons. Below the list, there is a text box with the instruction 'Type or paste links below. Just one per line!' and a subtext 'Then, you'll get a chance to write a short blurb about each link. And you can always add more later!'. Below this text box is a large empty text area for pasting links. To the right of this text area is a 'Help me find links' button. At the bottom right of the text area is a 'Done Adding' button. At the bottom of the interface are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons.

Now, every visitor to your lens can vote these links up or down, so the good ones will rise to the top. Even better, they can suggest links you never even heard of. Of course, your lens is about a candy different from Baby Ruth, so you'll have to make up your own.

The very cool part of this is that you don't have to do much work at all. You type in the links all at once into the box and Squidoo automatically looks up each one for you, guesses about the headlines and the text and shows it to you for your approval.

But wait, where do you get the links?

Built into the Links Plexo is a little button that says, “Help me find links”. This will open a window that lets you type in a search and have Google go out and find link suggestions for you. Or, you can do a search on your own and copy and paste the links right into the Links Plexo module. It will then go out and look up each link and grab some starter text for you.

There are three other tabs across the top. Sharing, Submissions and Display. You can easily leave these alone and be quite happy, but feel free to poke around to customize the module. For example, if you want to forbid other people from suggesting their own links, you can do that with one click. You can also make it easy for people to include your list in other places (like their blogs) and you can alter how many links show up when people visit your lens.

Nothing is permanent... if you make a change and you don't like it, you can always go back and undo it.

Amazon Spotlight is next. This is a big picture of one book or DVD or whatever you want to feature, along with a link to buy the item (and earn you a commission). While you could pick CaddyShack for this one, we're going to pick the book Candy Freak by Steve Almond.

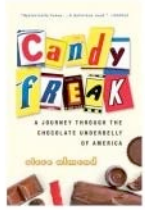


All you have to do is EDIT the module then click on the button that says *Help me find a product*. That will bring up an Amazon search box. Type in the name of the book you want, pull down BOOK from the list and the module will find you every book that matches on Candy Freak. Find the one you want, click on it, and it's added. Go ahead and add some original prose, “This book is really funny, sometimes sad, and will teach you an enormous amount about the candy industry. Highly recommended!” Then hit SAVE.

You'll end up with a big juicy ad for a book you love.

Candy Freak is a great book

I can't get over how great



Candyfreak: A Journey through the Chocolate Underbelly of America
by Steve Almond

Amazon Price: \$10.40 (as of 05/30/2008)

It's a terrific read, fun and funny and occasionally sad. If you love chocolate, you'll love this.

Related topics: [Meatball Sundae](#), [book](#), [marketing](#), [Business](#), [more](#)

More Modules

eBay and YouTube are pretty similar in that all you need to do is type in some keywords and they'll go out and search for relevant auctions or videos. Here, for example, is a model train I found on eBay:



The cool thing is that the eBay search automatically updates, so after the auction is over, new listings will be rotated into your lens.

With the YouTube module, you can basically create your own TV network. The module lets you pick several videos per module, so you can make a big stack of your favorites and let your tribe see them one by one.

The Joy of Modules

Squidoo contains hundreds of modules, and we add them all the time. The details of each module change over time, because we are frequently adding new functionality and power to them. That means that we can't show you exactly how each one of them works in this ebook, but that's fine. It's fine because they're easy.

Each module does just one or two things, and the name is a giveaway about what you'll find. The Polaroid module lets you post a single picture with a white border. The Postit module lets you put little yellow notes on your lens. The Google Maps module... you get the idea.

If you remember what Squidoo is for, it all fits together. We're trying to make the web make sense. We want to let people like you collect the links and pictures and text and sites and comments and debates that bring an idea into focus, that give

people the confidence to surf the rest of the web for what they need. You're building an information kiosk, a sign post, an organized brochure and a trail map. The modules help you do that.

Let's focus on three really powerful ones that you might want to pursue:

What do you think of the Baby Ruth?

This is your chance to speak up...

Is this the best candy bar ever?



I say:

The Baby Ruth is better than warm tub full of Jello

Meh... I'd rather have a Hershey's Kiss!



sethgodin says:

There's a reason they used a Baby Ruth in Caddyshack guys

Posted May 30, 2008

1 of 1 page

The Duel module makes it easy for you to host a debate. For example, on your Baby Ruth page, you can have a debate between “The Baby Ruth is better than warm tub full of Jello” vs. “Meh... I'd rather have a Hershey's Kiss.” Then, anyone visiting your lens can choose one side or the argument or the other and jump in and debate.

When people engage like this, they're more likely to come back to see what others had to say. Engagement also leads to word of mouth.

Setting up the Duel module

Give your module a title

Titles can only be one line, so keep it short

What do you think of the Baby Ruth?

Give your module a subtitle (optional)

When titles just aren't enough

This is your chance to speak up...

Give your module a description (optional)

What do you want to ask?

Gimme an option

Gimme another option

Who do you want commenting?

- Only logged in Squidoo members, please.
 Anyone who visits my lens!

When should their blurbs be approved?

Send you an approval email for pending blurbs?

If no, please check here from time to time to approve new blurbs. Thanks.

Show how many blurbs per page?

Show commenter photos (thumbnails)?

Strip all HTML out of blurbs?

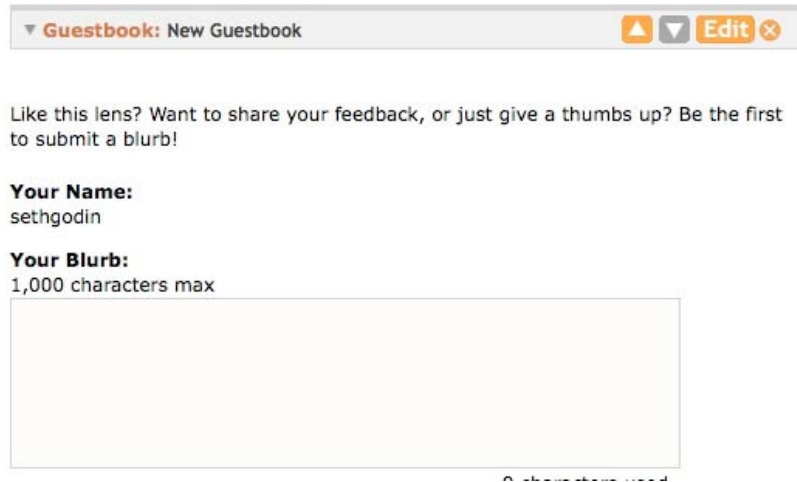
Setting up the Duel module is incredibly easy. We give you a bunch of options and you just fill in the blanks. Most of the options are clear, but a couple to note:

You can 'strip html' out of the debate, which means that people won't be able to include links to other sites within their argument. This cuts down on self-promotional bozos.

You can also require that people have to be registered with Squidoo before posting. This dramatically increases the quality of the posts you'll get, even though it cuts down on their number.

And finally, you can be alerted by email when someone posts, and you can require manual approval of each post, which lets you monitor what's happening very closely.

Setting up the Guestbook



The screenshot shows the 'New Guestbook' setup page. At the top, there is a header bar with a dropdown arrow, the text 'Guestbook: New Guestbook', and three icons: an up arrow, a down arrow, and an 'Edit' button with a close icon. Below the header, there is a prompt: 'Like this lens? Want to share your feedback, or just give a thumbs up? Be the first to submit a blurb!'. Underneath, the 'Your Name:' field is filled with 'sethgodin'. The 'Your Blurb:' field is empty, with a note '1,000 characters max'.

The Guestbook is a simple module with fewer choices. It has a lot in common with the Duel module though, in that it lets your visitors post a comment. If you want repeat traffic and ongoing discussion, this is a great place to start.

Just like the Duel module, you can change the settings of who can comment and whether or not you get notified and have approval.

That leads to YouTube and to eBay. As you have probably guessed by now, each has its own module, each is easy to add

and each permits you to find things on those sites and place them on your lens.

By this point, you've figured out how they work (don't worry, though, the pictures are at <http://www.squidoo.com/stepbystep>. You can use the module to help you find the links you want, or you can find the links using Google or other tools before you start editing the module.

For example, it took just a few seconds to find this video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3fsfnYaQAI>) of four teenagers singing into their Baby Ruth candy bars. Exactly the sort of thing you'd want to show off on your lens.

After You've Built a Lens

As we've seen, this is a process, not an event. Building the first draft of your lens is just a starting point. Now, the real fun begins. There are five things to do now:

1. Revise and update and improve your lens on a regular basis.
2. Promote your lens to relevant bloggers.
3. Invite your readers to participate and in return, be generous.
4. Build more lenses and don't be afraid to connect them to each other and to other lensmasters.
5. Contribute.

The rest of this ebook will cover all five of these topics. If you bring the steps into little pieces, you'll quickly discover that nothing takes that long. Drip, drip, drip you will build a web of connections and traffic and attention and relationships that will help you every single day and continue to pay off as you go.



Revise and update and improve your lens on a regular basis

Your lens is started, but it's not done.

Your lens can grow in three ways:

1. You can add more modules.
2. You can take the modules you've got and make them richer and more detailed.
3. You can let your readers contribute and turn the lens turn from a flat content site into a living, breathing watercooler

Adding more modules is addictive. There are more than a hundred to choose from, and a quick poke around ought to inspire. For example, why not include a Google map to your business or the venue for your next concert?

I like the Amazon spotlight module, which makes it easy to promote a single book or DVD or even a \$12,000 garden gazebo. Not just a link, it includes a big picture and plenty of room for you to include an honest recommendation.

Two easily overlooked modules are the BLACK BOX and the THE MOST IMPORTANT THING. These are not subtle. They are not particularly elegant. But they make your point and they make it vividly. If you don't overuse these two, you'll find that you can really hammer home a point.

Here are five more modules to experiment with:

- **Orbitz**—a simple way to add travel reservations capability to your page.
- **RSS**—subtle but powerful. You can include just about any one of the eighty million blogs being published every day. Not just that, but any site that has an RSS feed (like a technorati search result, or even Basecamp) can present updates inside of your lens. This single tool is enough to vitalize any lens.
- **Text List Voting**—we'll talk a lot more about community input, but this is a good moment to think about letting your users not only vote on which ideas are important, but contribute their own.
- **Polaroid**—if you've got a picture, share it. People love pictures, and here's a tip: captions are the most read text on any web page.
- **Poll**—with just a few clicks, you can offer your readers a poll on any topic you like.

Perhaps the most complicated one is also the coolest. It's called Animoto. Here's what you'll be able to do once it's finished:

1. Visit <http://www.animoto.com>. Upload a bunch of your favorite pictures and (for free) the site will make a music video out of them
2. When you're done, click on the little Squidoo icon and Animoto will take the music video and put it on your lens for you. That's cool.

Promote your lens to relevant bloggers



Please understand that the most important word in the headline is NOT “promote.” Nor is it “your”. It’s relevant.

Bloggers love to share ideas. And they love to hear from readers. But you know what we hate? We hate being spammed. We hate impersonal, irrelevant, unanticipated junk thrown at us just because someone is in a hurry.

So, here’s what you do:

If you have a lens on a given topic, go find blogs that talk about that topic (you can find a great source at <http://www.technorati.com>). Read the blogs. Contribute to the blogs. If you have questions about the blog, ask them.

Then, after you've earned the right, then, and only then, drop the blogger a note. Let them know what you're up to, talk about your lens, ask for input or advice or a contribution of content or perhaps promotion.

You'll be amazed at what happens.

If you're actually contributing, not sponging off the system... if your lens is interesting and useful... then traffic will start showing up. People will contribute and vote and comment and email you. And more will then blog about it and you're off to the races.

IF you follow the steps, you WILL get the results.

If you take a shortcut, you lose.

Invite your readers to participate and in return, be generous

Many of the most effective Squidoo modules are interactive. The Duel module, as we've seen, let's you host a discussion. The Guestbook module isn't just for people to say, "I love this," but to disagree or amplify your points as well.

There's also the Plexo modules, like the Links Plexo, the Amazon Plexo, the Flickr Plexo and the Text Plexo. In each case, you can make it easy for people to add and to vote. One Plexo list had more than 100 contributions from readers. You can bet that they came back to see what other people were saying.

Which leads to the generous part.



You can't lead a tribe if your goal is to get more for you.

You get more when you give more.

So the purpose of your lens needs to be highlight and amplify and encourage people who visit. It must make their day better, not yours. After all, people can visit any web page they like... why would they visit yours if it only exists to take from them.

Give your content and your advice and your insight. Highlight the best of other sites and other inputs. Make your visitor the star.

Build more lenses and don't be afraid to connect them to each other and to other lensmasters

The web works best when it's a web! The connections you make to other sites, to your other lenses, to other people's lenses... these are the core of what you're setting out to build.

That might be the single most important sentence in the entire ebook, actually.

You're not building a conversion engine.

Or backlinks.

You're building a web, a network, a series of favors and links and connections and trust that over time will be worth more and more and more.

Once you build a lens, build a few flankers, lenses that will appeal to people who like your lens.

And when you find competition, *link to it!* That's the entire point. Your stuff is good enough that you don't need to fret about losing people to the other guys. In fact, in the long run, you'll come out ahead.

The more you give, the more you get.

Contribute



The people who get the most out of Squidoo have precisely one thing in common: They contribute to the community.

The Giant Squids (<http://www.giantsquidshowcase.com>) is an elite group of hand-selected lensmasters who built more than fifty (no, wait, a hundred!) lenses. They spend a great deal of time helping each other out, and are real leaders in our community.

The Angels are invited by us to help improve the cleanliness and delight of our site, and get special powers and potions to do their work.

We also have a very active forum (<http://www.squidu.com>) where you can go to find answers to every question about Squidoo. And the forum is 100% staffed by volunteers (like you, we

hope.) We're told again and again that it's the people answering the questions that get the most out of it.

We are lucky enough to have lensmasters who write ebooks, who do coaching and mentoring and how aren't shy about blogging about Squidoo and what they're discovering. Google returns more than 21,000,000 matches on Squidoo, and most of those are links from other sites pointing to ours.

Coming Soon: The Recipe Book!

By the time you read this, *The Joy of Squidoo*, a Book of Recipes, a companion mini-ebook will be ready for your reading pleasure. If you still need ideas on how to make Squidoo work for you, check it out. The place to find it:

(<http://www.squidoo.com/calamaribook>)