

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a vintage typewriter keyboard. The keys are dark and have light-colored lettering. A black rectangular text box is centered over the keyboard. In the background, the mechanical parts of the typewriter are visible, including a large metal wheel and a small yellow diamond-shaped label with a black symbol.

The Online Bio

From Twitter to Podcasts

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How to Craft Perfect Online Bios

by Nate Hoffelder

If you Google "online bios" you will find a million different articles, each with their own recommendation. Be short and to the point. Use the third person. Simply say who you are, and give your publishing credits.

A lot of this advice is good, but I also think it is incomplete. Business people need bios that can be used on social media profiles, contributor profile pages, on the web, and in introductions at speaking engagements. Since we are looking at radically different lengths, this essentially means multiple different bios.

Depending on who is counting, this could mean up to five different bios.

Yes, **five different bios**. Writing all those bios isn't as hard as it looks, but the idea can be daunting, which is why I created this workbook to help you write your bios.

Instructions

The following pages have specific details on the lengths for each bio, and space for you to write them out.

You don't have to put your entire life out on display, but you do need to concentrate on the things you want to be known for. Your goal is to establish your brand, and consistently display it across all platforms.

Try to define yourself in a single word or phrase. For example, what word comes to mind when you think of Gary Vaynerchuk? Or what about Jeff Bezos?

You might also try to answer the following questions.

- What's your purpose, your cause, your belief?
- Why do you get out of bed in the morning?
- Why should anyone care?
- Who likes your work?

Facebook

Every Facebook user has a bio on their profile page. It is **100 characters long**, and is located at the top of the left-hand column. Since space is at a premium, be succinct.

EXAMPLE:

Bad: ... (blank) ...

Good: Speaker to websites. I know why tech goes thump in the night. Fixing your tech problem is my nirvana

Twitter

The Twitter bio is **160 characters** long, and can be found on your profile page. It's a little longer than a FB intro bio, so you can add more details. If you have room, you might want to also reference your other Twitter accounts.

EXAMPLE:

Bad: Author, blogger, a lifetime of projects. This is a retweet of my blog.

Good: Public relations for book publishers, authors, the book industry. DM or publicity@bookbuzz.com for information, author interviews, review copies.

TIP: Did you know you can pin a post to the top of your Twitter profile? That is an extra **280 characters** you can use to promote yourself.

Podcast / Interviews

At some point in your career you will be interviewed on a podcast, for a radio show, or on tv. It would be a good idea to give the interviewer a **twenty to thirty word bio** they can use to introduce you. (Obviously the Twitter and Facebook bios won't do.)

EXAMPLE:

Bad: John Dunlap was born and raised in the little town of Kilpatrick, Idaho, where he learned to grow potatoes at an early age. He hopes to have his own potato farm one day, and in the meantime he teaches and writes.

Good: John Dunlap writes regularly for *Cow Toon* magazine, and other local publications. Holding a master's degree in agriculture, he teaches at Kilpatrick Community College and volunteers at Kilpatrick High School, where he teaches students to grow potatoes.



Guest Blogger

Writing guest blog posts is a highly effective way to get your name out there. Not only do you get to speak to the audience of a popular blog, you can also add an author bio to your post and use it to promote yourself.

While you should keep the bio under **sixty words**, that still gives you plenty of room to say what you do, talk up your accomplishments, and give a personal detail for readers to connect to.

EXAMPLE:

Nate Hoffelder has been building and running Wordpress sites since 2010. He blogs about indie publishing and helps authors connect with readers by customizing websites to suit each author's voice. You may have heard his site, The Digital Reader, mentioned on podcasts such as The Creative Penn, Wordslinger, or Sell More Books Show. In his spare time, he fosters dogs for A Forever Home, a local rescue group.



Profile bio

This is the bio you use on the about page for projects where you are a major contributor. It is similar to the bio a professor might have on a university's website, although obviously it is written for a different audience.

At **250 to 300 words**, the profile bio is long enough that you can really go into detail. At the same time, you will probably want to tailor your bio to each site you use it on.

Profile bio (cont.)

Now that you have a bio, why not get a site to go with it? I am a web designer that builds sites for freelancers, creators, and other professionals. Just wave your hand and tell me to take care of it, and I'll build you a site that suits your personality, never crashes, and is guaranteed to help you grow your career.

Contact me today!



Notes

Feel free to use the space below to jot down any ideas inspired by this exercise,
or just for doodling.