

you make sharing part of your daily routine, you'll notice themes and trends emerging in what you share. You'll find patterns in your flow.

When you detect these patterns, you can start gathering these bits and pieces and turn them into something bigger and more substantial. You can turn your flow into stock. For example, a lot of the ideas in this book started out as tweets, which then became blog posts, which then became book chapters. Small things, over time, can get big.

## BUILD A GOOD (DOMAIN) NAME.

"Carving out a space for yourself online, somewhere where you can express yourself and share your work, is still one of the best possible investments you can make with your time."

—Andy Baio

Social networks are great, but they come and go. (Remember Myspace? Friendster? GeoCities?) If you're really interested in sharing your work and expressing yourself, nothing beats owning your own space online, a place that you control, a place that no one can take away from you, a world headquarters where people can always find you.

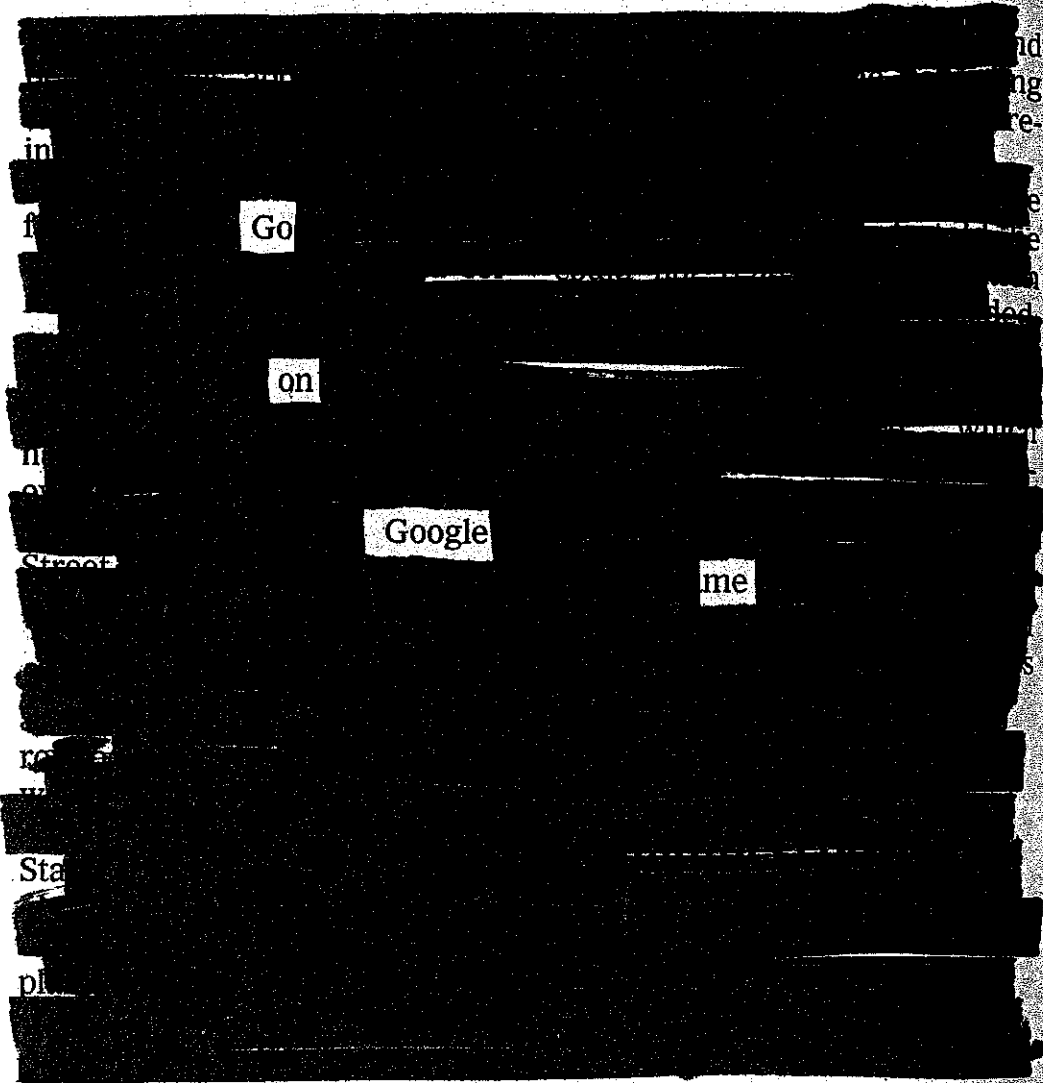
More than 10 years ago, I staked my own little Internet claim and bought the domain name austinkleon.com. I was a complete amateur with no skills when I began building my website: It started off bare bones and ugly. Eventually, I figured out how to install a blog, and that changed everything. A blog is the ideal machine for turning flow into stock: One little blog post is nothing on its own, but publish a thousand blog posts over a decade, and it turns into your life's work. My blog has been my sketchbook, my studio, my gallery, my storefront, and my salon. Absolutely everything good that has happened in my career can be

traced back to my blog. My books, my art shows, my speaking gigs, some of my best friendships—they all exist because I have my own little piece of turf on the Internet.

So, if you get one thing out of this book make it this: Go register a domain name. Buy `www.[insert your name here].com`. If your name is common, or you don't like your name, come up with a pseudonym or an alias, and register that. Then buy some web hosting and build a website. (These things sound technical, but they're really not—a few Google searches and some books from the library will show you the way.) If you don't have the time or inclination to build your own site, there's a small army of web designers ready to help you. Your website doesn't have to look pretty; it just has to exist.

Don't think of your website as a self-promotion machine, think of it as a self-invention machine. Online, you can become the person you really want to be. Fill your website with your work and your ideas and the stuff you care about.





Over the years, you will be tempted to abandon it for the newest, shiniest social network. Don't give in. Don't let it fall into neglect. Think about it in the long term. Stick with it, maintain it, and let it change with you over time.

When she was young and starting out, Patti Smith got this advice from William Burroughs: "Build a good name. Keep your name clean. Don't make compromises. Don't worry about making a bunch of money or being successful. Be concerned with doing good work . . . and if you can build a good name, eventually that name will be its own currency."

The beauty of owning your own turf is that you can do whatever you want with it. Your domain name is your domain. You don't have to make compromises. Build a good domain name, keep it clean, and eventually it will be its own currency. Whether people show up or they don't, you're out there, doing your thing, ready whenever they are.