

# CONTENT



Hacks

## 34 Tips & Tricks for Planning & Creating Content



#4 Host an “Ask Me Anything” event.

#10 Organize content ideas with Evernote.



#27 Create “pinnable” images for your blog.



Real content creators. Real advice.  
No preaching. Just the hacks.

A Publication of

**HubSpot**

# TABLE OF



## *Contents*

<b>Introduction</b>	Page 2
<b>Planning Hacks</b>	Page 4
<b>Writing Hacks</b>	Page 29
<b>Design Hacks</b>	Page 54
<b>More Resources</b>	Page 75

# INTRO



*-duction*

## Content: Nobody Said It Was Easy.

Creating quality content is an integral part of any successful inbound marketing strategy. Unfortunately, a lack of time, resources, and writing or design skills can all hinder our ability to create to the extent that we'd like. To help make our lives a little easier, I've compiled these 34 hacks to help you with the planning, writing, and designing of content. Enjoy!

*- Erik Devaney*



Follow me on Twitter!

@BardOfBoston

Erik is a content strategist at HubSpot. Prior to becoming a HubSpotter, he was the inbound marketing manager at Placester (a real estate marketing tech firm), and a content manager at Dailybreak (a native ad platform). A graduate of McGill University, Erik began his career as a freelance writer.

# COMING UP



*Next*

**Introduction**

Page 2

**Planning Hacks**

Page 4

**Writing Hacks**

Page 29

**Design Hacks**

Page 54

**More Resources**

Page 75

# *Content Hack #1*

Create a headline  
swipe file to inspire  
content topic ideas.



Remington Begg  
Chief Remarkable Officer  
[Impulse Creative](#)  
[@impulsecreative](#)



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #1



Coming up with blog topics can be daunting. So here's a tip: Create a headline swipe file to help inspire ideas. A headline swipe file is a simple document where you can collect great headlines and share them with your entire team. [Download a copy of our swipe file](#) and read through the headlines — try to determine why each of them works for you. What psychological strings are your titles pulling that make people take action? Just be sure to deliver on the promise you make in your headline.

## Fill in the Blanks...

(XYZ Event) Starts/Closes/Ends In [time period]

[blank] – So Simple Even Your Kids Can Do It

[blank] Gone in [X] Days Or Money Back

[blank] Hacking With [World Class Example]

[blank] May Be Causing You To Lose Out On [desired result]

[blank] May Be Dangerous To Your [blank]

[blank] Reveals Ways To [desired result] Without [undesired result]

[blank] Secrets: How To Get [blank] Using These 5 Techniques



TWEET THIS HACK!

# *Content Hack #2*

Turn client questions  
into content topics.



Mike Lieberman  
President  
[Square 2 Marketing](#)  
[@Square2](#)



TWEET THIS HACK!

## Content Hack #2



Are you constantly thinking, “What should I blog about?” Or are you struggling to decide what that next ebook should be about? Don’t despair. The answer to this common question is actually found in other questions. Think about it. The questions prospects ask during your sales process are perfect topic ideas for blog posts, white papers, ebooks, and videos.

Remember, for all those who ask, there are others who don’t. Providing content that answers their questions gets them to visit your website, turns them to leads, better nurtures them in your sales process, shortens your sales cycle, and delivers happier customers.

Editor’s note: The next two hacks (#3 & #4) will give you advice on how you can research the questions your clients and prospective clients are asking!



TWEET THIS HACK!

# *Content Hack #3*

## Use Google tools to research questions.



Jeff Ferguson

CEO

Fang Digital Marketing

@FangDigital



TWEET THIS HACK!

## Content Hack #3



The content on our website is focused on answering our clients' or potential clients' questions. We base our research on answering as many of these questions as we can. To do this, we look both outside and within.

On the “within” side, we constantly monitor Google Analytics (now [Google Webmaster Tools](#)) for the keywords people use to find our site. If we see a question we're not answering, we create new content to address that query.

On the “outside” level, we look to other search-based tools, such as [Google AdWords Keyword Planner](#) or [Google Trends](#), to discover terms that are clearly posed as a question. In both cases, we're looking for the “long tail” questions that people are actually asking.



TWEET THIS HACK!

# *Content Hack #4*

## Host an “Ask Me Anything” event.



Luke Summerfield

Director of Inbound Marketing

Savvy Panda

@SavvyLuke



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #4



Can't think of content ideas that will resonate with your audience? Here's a great way to come up with the perfect topics! Host an online event called "Ask Me Anything" or AMA. This is where your audience can ask you any question that is on their mind and you'll supply amazing answers. This 2-way conversation is great not only for developing relationships with your audience, but also for establishing yourself as an authority, helping your users, and for giving you great insight into their needs.

You can host your AMA on various platforms, my favorite being [Google Hangouts](#). Google Hangouts will allow you and your audience to catch some face time and get a deeper connection than just submitted text questions. Some other options for hosting an AMA include a Twitter chat with a hashtag, [GoToMeeting](#), or even an industry specific forum (very common in the inbound world on [Inbound.org](#)).



TWEET THIS HACK!

# *Content Hack #5*

Use RSS feeds to find  
newsjack-worthy  
content topics.



Pamela Vaughan  
Senior Blog Strategist  
[HubSpot](#)  
[@pamelump](#)



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #5



Make it easier to spot news and current events that have [newsjacking](#) potential by creating a "Newsjacking" group of RSS feeds in your RSS reader. Then subscribe to all the publications that are likely to publish news relative to your industry, whether they be other industry publications, media sites, or general news sites. Scan your feed once in the morning and once in the afternoon to identify newsjacking opportunities.

## News-For-HubSpot-Blog

9,662 unread articles

### MOST RECOMMENDED

	Business Insider	1K	<a href="#">Wal-Mart Asks Workers To Donate Food To Its Needy Employees</a>	A Cleveland Wal-Mart store is holding
	Techmeme	10K	<a href="#">CIA and DOD seek to block Russia from building US-based monitoring stations for GPS competitor</a>	
	Fast Company	500+	<a href="#">10 Surprising Social Media Statistics That Will Make You Rethink Your Social Strategy</a>	Know what th

### LATEST

	Search Blog	<a href="#">Expert Advice from Tom Colicchio</a>	One of the highlights of a cheerful holiday season is getting together with	
	GigaOM	4	<a href="#">Salesforce.com buys Cloud Connect just in time for Dreamforce</a>	Salesforce.com has purchased Cloud
	The ExactTarge...	6	<a href="#">Simple Steps to Crafting the Perfect Email Campaign</a>	Social media may be in the midst of its heyday, a



TWEET THIS HACK!

# *Content Hack #6*

Use interviews to gather insight.



Steve Brown

Managing Member

[ROI Online](#)

[@StevBrown](#)



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #6

“ We write content for our clients. We have found the simplest way to get the topics and supplemental information we need from our busy clients is to interview them as if we were interviewing them for a magazine article or a news story. It just works. They are relieved from the stress of having to think of topics and find the interview process pleasant and helpful.



TWEET THIS HACK!

## *Content Hack #7*

Survey your audience  
to generate ideas.



Jessica Donlon

Senior Consultant

PR 20/20

@JessicaDonlon



TWEET THIS HACK!

## Content Hack #7



What's the ultimate solution your product or service provides, and what do you need to know about your audience to give a strong recommendation? Consider including quick, smart-form surveys with content offers, or a larger app (price calculator, recommendation engine, Mad Libs-style survey) to collect responses. Survey fields help your brand identify and [score potential leads](#), while they also propel content ideas. Export data frequently to identify trends and pain points. Share your findings and continually cater topics to your most engaged audience.



TWEET THIS HACK!

# *Content Hack #8*

Use a content topic  
brainstorm key.



Jay Acunzo

Senior Manager, Content

HubSpot

@Jay\_zo



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #8



Using a visual key like the one below, you can create more ideas more easily. Simply add the topic you want to address in the top. Then, \*randomly\* select from the checkboxes along each row. So “Executive / List / Text Article” helps you frame the brainstorm. You could think up things like “10 CEOs Using Twitter Properly” or “The 10 Biggest Errors Executives Make on Twitter.” Ready to move on? Simply nudge to a new criterion (like “Q&A”) and suddenly you have “Interview with Example CEO on How Executives Can Use Social Media Properly” ... and so on!

TOPIC	Proper etiquette on social media					
AUDIENCE	Beginner	Intermediate	Professional	Executive		
STRUCTURE	List	How-To	News	Q&A	Opinion	Curated
FORMAT	Text Article		Graphic	Slides	Audio	Video



# *Content Hack #9*

## Use Google Alerts to find content ideas.



Paul Furiga

President & CEO

[WordWrite Communications](#)

[@paulfuriga](#)

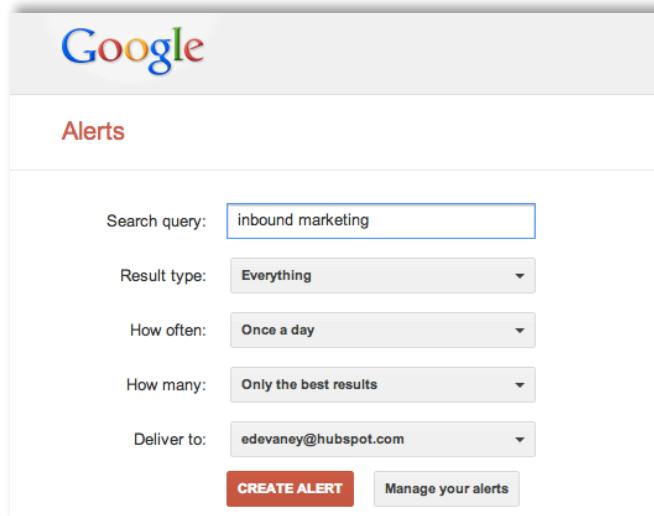


TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #9

“

One of the best ways to organize your writing and make sure that you never run out of topics is to combine two simple and complementary web tools: [Google Alerts](#) and a platform such as [Storify](#) or [Evernote](#). Google Alerts can be set up to track news, blogs, and other content on topics that you believe will make great blog posts. By regularly dropping this content into Evernote or Storify, you can easily organize all of those compelling topics and source materials that you can't remember or can't find when you're facing writer's block.



Editor's note: The very next hack (#10) will offer a deeper dive into Evernote!



TWEET THIS HACK!

# *Content Hack #10*

## Organize content ideas with Evernote.



Sharmin Kent

Content Marketing Coordinator

[DigitalRelevance](#)

[@STMKent](#)



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #10

“ Coordinating blog and content creation efforts is a little like herding cats: You have to corral dozens of pieces of content written by an entire organization, as well as generate new ideas and follow trends in your industry. There’s a host of tools available online, but [Evernote](#) does it all for me. Use the notebooks to sort and categorize notes from meetings and keep track of content ideas as they pop up. Chrome users can install [the Evernote Web Clipper](#) and sort just about anything from the Web into notebooks. I’d be lost without it! ”

The screenshot shows the Evernote desktop application. On the left, a sidebar lists notebooks: Announcements, Shortcuts (with sub-items Work - To Do Lists (63) and Daily/Misc. (116)), Blog ideas (253), Notes (1622), Notebooks (with sub-items Not Work and Notebook Stack), and Work Stuff (with sub-items Blog Drafts (70), Case studies (2), and Content Marketing Coordinator (97)). The main pane is titled "Blog ideas". It displays a list of cards:

- Reminders (2)
- Native Ads Get Their Own Networks | Digiday  
11/19/2013 Native Ads Get Their Own Networks 66  
Jack Marshall | November 19, 2013 Follow  
@JackMarshall 2 45 4 Native ad critics usually harp on...
- A writing gap in the workplace | Article...  
11/18/2013 Sign up for the Yes, I accept Terms of Use. Terms of Use | Today's Headlines Follow PR Daily on: Submit ...
- Uncloaking Keyword-Specific Organic...  
11/18/2013 Column: All Things SEO  
Column Uncloaking Keyword-Specific Organic Traffic To Your Site In The No...



TWEET THIS HACK!

# *Content Hack #11*

Create and maintain  
an editorial calendar.



Larry Levenson

Chief Inbound Officer

Sigma Web Marketing

@sigmawebmktg



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #11



An [editorial calendar](#) helps you stay organized, and it's the closest thing you have to "set it and forget it." The last thing you want to do after a busy day is to sit down and stress out over getting a blog post written and published. By maintaining an editorial calendar, you can plan out your posts well in advance. By seeing all of your posts in one place, it also allows you to visualize "big picture things" like themes, series of posts, and making sure you have a diverse variety of the things you're writing about.

Your Business Name Editorial Calendar 2014					
Target Pub Date	Author	Target Persona	Tag(s)	Title/Topic	Status
JANUARY					
Week of 30-Dec					
Mon	Larry	Marketer Mary	hubspot	17 reasons you should start 2014 with HubSpot	draft
Tue	Melissa	Marketer Mary	youtube	Marketing with ouTube - Have Fun!	idea
Wed	Liz	Marketer Mary	email marketing	#4 in series	idea
Thu	Larry	Marketer Mary	inbound	Lessons Learned	idea



TWEET THIS HACK!

# *Content Hack #12*

Always share  
relevant content with  
your team.



Rebecca Tucker  
Marketing Coordinator  
BlinkJar Media  
[@RebeccaBTucker](https://twitter.com/RebeccaBTucker)

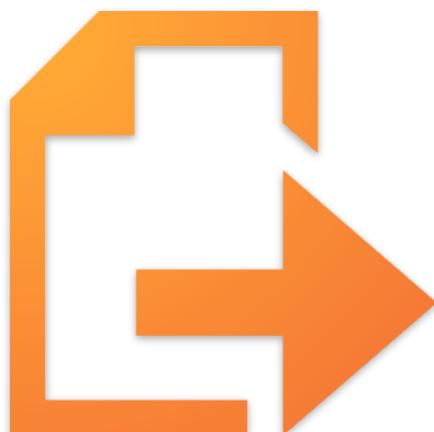


TWEET THIS HACK!

## Content Hack #12

“ Within our agency, we create content for extremely varied industries. In our time spent perusing emails, social feeds, and search engine results, we typically come across great ideas or fresh news items relevant to one of our client's accounts. So, it is obligatory practice for the viewer to copy that link and forward it to the lead on that account.

It's amazing the reductions seen in time spent researching for content calendars and social posts since we have implemented this practice!



TWEET THIS HACK!

# COMING UP



*Next*

**Introduction**

Page 2

**Planning Hacks**

Page 4

**Writing Hacks**

Page 29

**Design Hacks**

Page 54

**More Resources**

Page 75

# *Content Hack #13*

Always start with a  
working title.



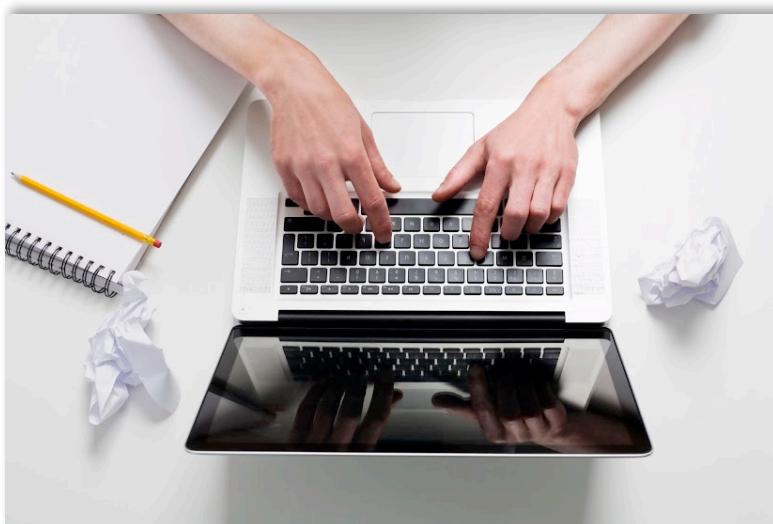
Shannon Johnson  
Content Strategist  
[HubSpot](#)  
[@shannopop](#)



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #13

“ I never finalize a title before I'm done writing. Instead, I use a “working title” -- one that's reflective of what I'm writing about, but not yet as eye-catching as it could be. Why? Because even if I create an outline before I start writing, the final product always strays at least a little bit from the original plan. Not worrying about the title until I know I can craft one that accurately reflects the finished piece allows me to stay focused on the hard part -- actually writing!



TWEET THIS HACK!

# *Content Hack #14*

Keep a dictionary and  
thesaurus handy.



Jaymie Scotto Cutaia

CEO & Founder

[Jaymie Scotto & Associates](#)

[@jscotto](#)



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #14

Often while writing a blog or presentation, I keep sites like [dictionary.com](http://dictionary.com) and its companion [thesaurus.com](http://thesaurus.com) open as references, so I'm not using the same words over and over again. Synonyms are a great way to keep things "attention-grabbing," as well as for helping to refine a message that may not be immediately clear (e.g. is something innovative, sophisticated, or just new?). If you are working on a Mac, you can use the shortcut Control-Command-D while hovering over a word on a webpage orTextEdit document to pull up a dictionary/thesaurus box.



TWEET THIS HACK!

# *Content Hack #15*

Listen to classical  
music while you write.



Erik Devaney

Content Strategist

[HubSpot](#)

[@BardOfBoston](#)



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #15

“ Blaring your favorite Beatles, Mumford & Sons, or Jay-Z tunes while writing may seem like a good idea. After all, if you enjoy a particular artist or genre of music, it stands to reason that listening to that artist or genre while you write will put you in a good mood. But here’s what I’ve found: When I listen to music that I love while writing, I get distracted. I pay too much attention to the lyrics. I start singing along. And before I know it, I’ve stopped writing and have started dancing at my desk. With classical music, the intricate notes and movements stimulate the brain, but there are no lyrics (unless you’re listening to an opera) to interrupt or compete with your inner voice.



TWEET THIS HACK!

# *Content Hack #16*

Combine blog posts  
to create an ebook.



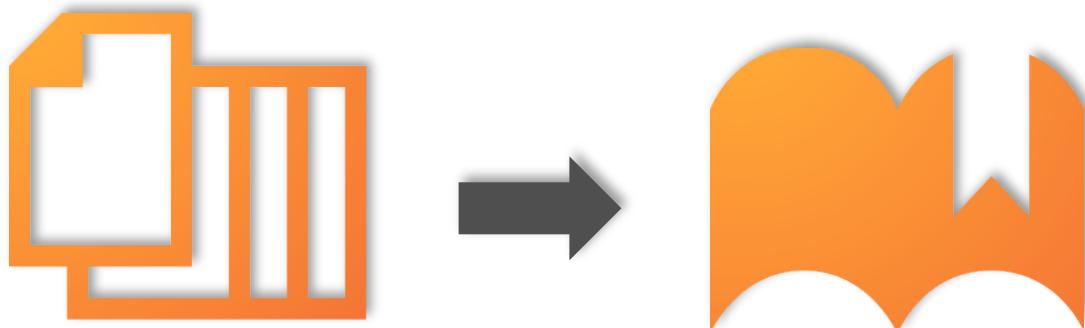
Kathleen Booth  
Owner & CEO  
[Quintain Marketing](#)  
[@Quintain](#)



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #16

“ Writing an ebook can be intimidating, but offering long-form, premium content is an effective way of generating top-of-the-funnel leads. I like to create an outline for my ebooks, and then treat each chapter as a separate blog post. I use outsourced writing services like [Zerys](#) to commission those blogs and then edit them to create the complete ebook. Using this method, you get several weeks worth of blogs posts AND an ebook to boot! The process is simple and makes ebook creation quick and easy.



# Content Hack #17

Save time writing with Evernote's speech-to-text feature.



Ginny Soskey  
Staff Writer  
[HubSpot](#)  
[@gsosk](#)

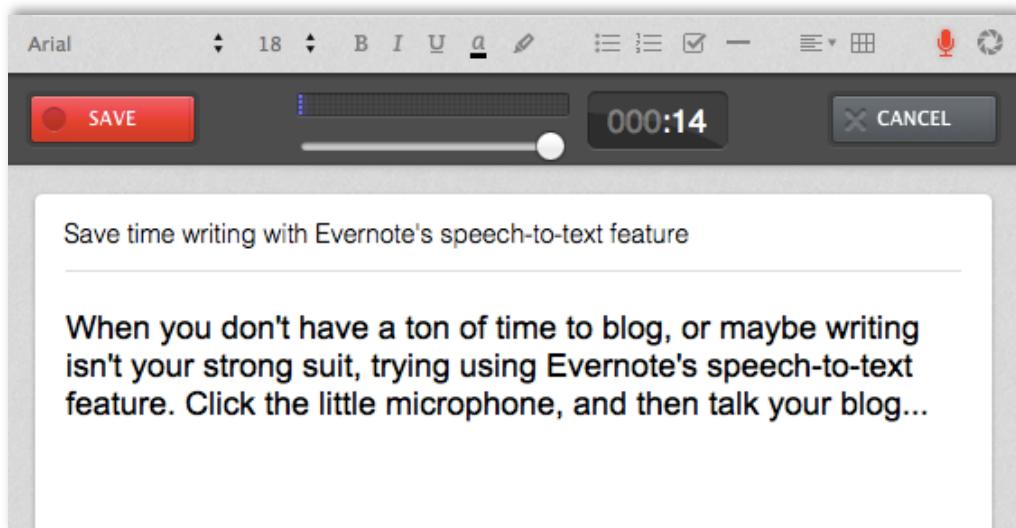


TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #17

“ When you don't have a ton of time to blog, or maybe writing isn't your strong suit, try using Evernote's speech-to-text feature. Click the little microphone, and then talk your blog post out! You'll have a ton of content in just a few minutes.

Want to learn how to use Evernote's speech-to-text feature? [Read how I used this hack here.](#)



TWEET THIS HACK!

# *Content Hack #18*

Create a quick blog post by interviewing an expert.



Scott Meyer

Founder

9 Clouds

@MrScottMeyer



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #18

“ Create expert blog content about a topic you are not an expert about in 15 minutes. How? Call an expert, which could be your client, someone at a company specializing in the topic, or by finding someone on [Clarity.fm](#). Record the conversation using Skype Call Recorder, then submit the audio to [speechpad.com](#). They will transcribe it and within a few hours or days you will have expert content ready to post and share.



TWEET THIS HACK!

# *Content Hack #19*

Beat writer's block  
with a beverage.



Corey Eridon  
Senior Blog Editor  
HubSpot  
[@Corey\\_bos](https://twitter.com/Corey_bos)



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #19

“ Having trouble getting started with writing? Enjoy a nice cocktail? You're in luck. If you're suffering from writer's block, there's nothing like the confidence 2 alcoholic beverages gives you to get the words free-flowing. Just be sure to invest in a talented, sober editor. As Hemingway said, “Write drunk, edit sober.”



TWEET THIS HACK!

# *Content Hack #20*

Reuse existing copy  
for new content.



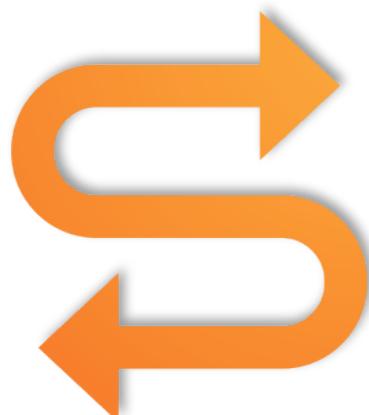
Wendy Covey  
President  
TREW Marketing  
@trewmarketing



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #20

“ As your company grows, you’ll begin to see the value and efficiency of reusing content. You may have a press release written about a product and then six months later you need a bulleted list of features to put on that product’s landing page. If you have [a corporate style guide](#) and your press release is edited to that style guide, you can easily drag and drop the features list from your press release to your new web page, without having to re-work the content. There will be no question if the wording or branding of the older content matches the new one, because they both adhere to the same style guide.



TWEET THIS HACK!

# *Content Hack #21*

Create a new ebook  
by transcribing an old  
webinar.



Dan Stasiewski

Technology Director

Kuno Creative

@DanStasiewski

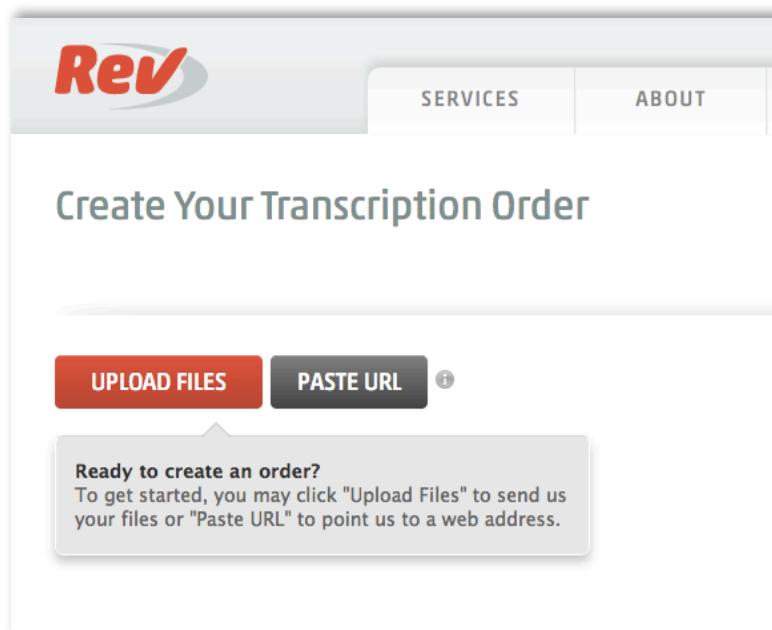


TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #21



You can get a solid first draft of a new ebook or guide just by having your last webinar transcribed. Services like [rev.com](http://rev.com) can inexpensively produce a text document from a recorded webinar, which you can then use as the starting point for your next educational download. And because the webinar presentation already has graphics, you can lay out and design the new piece more easily, too.



TWEET THIS HACK!

# *Content Hack #22*

Guide your writing  
with themed blogging  
days.



Jordan P. White

Content Creator

Inbound Marketing Agents

@jordanpwhite



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #22

“ A great way to build on your prior blogging success and make writing an easier process is to create themed blogging days! The best way to start is to first analyze your most popular blog posts from the past and then create similar posts. Test out a few ideas by writing new posts about similar themes. For instance, if your most-read post is, “The 50 Best Burgers of Detroit,” try writing the “50 Best Salads in Michigan” next. Finally, designate a day of the week for your new blogging theme and let the new ideas flow!



# *Content Hack #23*

## Use Wikipedia as your style guide.



Jay Acunzo

Senior Manager, Content

[HubSpot](#)

[@Jay\\_zo](#)



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #23

“ Here's a really quick but super important tip: if you're ever unsure if the name of something should be capitalized, italicized, in quotes, etc., instead of diving into a massive style guide, simply look up the phrase in [Wikipedia](#). Then look at the title of that page. They almost always get it right. (For example, if you're not sure how to write a movie title, looking it up on Wikipedia shows you that the title should be italicized.)



The screenshot shows the Wikipedia article for "The Godfather". The page features the classic globe logo and the text "WIKIPEDIA The Free Encyclopedia". On the left sidebar, there are links for "Main page", "Contents", "Featured content", "Current events", "Random article", "Donate to Wikipedia", and "Wikimedia Shop". Below these is a "Interaction" section. The main content area has tabs for "Article" and "Talk", with "Article" selected. The title "The Godfather" is displayed in bold, followed by the subtitle "From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia". The article text begins with a summary of the 1972 film, mentioning its author, release year, and plot. It also notes its status as one of the greatest films in American cinema and its inclusion in the National Film Registry.



TWEET THIS HACK!

# *Content Hack #24*

Write about issues & controversies that affect your industry.



Spencer Pitman  
Director of Strategy  
PCR Agency  
@AlcesBull



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #24

“ Tension can be a great driver of culture. Often times, cruising industry-specific online forums gives insight into controversies or problems being felt across a space. You can leverage your expertise to craft a cogent solution that can be drafted into a blog post or ebook. Make sure, however, that you are careful not to alienate or offend people when taking a position on a controversial topic. An even-handed and fact-based piece is always better than something that will incite a flame war.



TWEET THIS HACK!

# COMING UP



*Next*

**Introduction**

Page 2

**Planning Hacks**

Page 4

**Writing Hacks**

Page 29

**Design Hacks**

Page 54

**More Resources**

Page 75

# Content Hack #25

Use an external monitor while designing.



Erik Devaney

Content Strategist

[HubSpot](#)

[@BardOfBoston](#)



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #25

“

Whether you're laying out an ebook or creating a Facebook graphic, using an external monitor can make the design process faster and easier. When working with two screens, you can keep your design program (PowerPoint, Photoshop, etc.) on one screen, and then use your second screen for grabbing text, images, and other resources. This eliminates the need to constantly drag and resize windows when you're bringing new elements into your design.



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #26

## Design CTAs with ease using Keynote.



Meg Hoppe

Content Director & Principal

Weidert Group

@meghoppe



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #26



Anyone with a copy of [Keynote](#) and an eye for design can create CTAs (calls-to-action) in minutes – no need for Photoshop! Here's how: On a Keynote page, draw a box the size you want your CTA to be (in pixels). We do 586 pixels by 230 pixels and add a background or fill color. Next, drop in an image as a .PNG. Insert a text box and write your offer copy. You can add a drop shadow to the CTA at this point, too. Finally, do a screen capture of just the CTA – this will automatically be saved as a .PNG file. Now you're ready to put it into your blog post!



Editor's note: You can also easily [create CTAs in PowerPoint](#).



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #27

Create “pinnable”  
images for your blog.



Alisa Meredith

Co-Owner

Scalable Social Media

@scalablesocial



TWEET THIS HACK!



# Content Hack #27



Every blog post on our site has a "pinnable" image. This image is ...

1. large enough for good pinning (at least 250 pixels by 250 pixels),
2. has a caption right in the image (good for people who don't read descriptions), and
3. has alternate text that makes for a fabulous default pin description. Sometimes we even tag ourselves in the description!

The image shows a blog post titled "How Images Get More Traffic to Your Blog" and a Pinterest pin creation interface.

**Blog Post Content:**

- Header:** How Images Get More Traffic to Your Blog
- Author:** Alisa Meredith (November 15, 2013)
- Image:** A photo of a woman reading a book to a young girl.
- Text:** "Four year old Natalie picks up a book, sits down on the couch with her teddy and her mom and snuggles in for a story." "The second the book is opened, however, she's howling for an old favorite, instead. How come? It looks like Mom dared to try to read her a story from a book without pictures!" "Few of us would have such a public reaction. Yet, admit it: you have judged a book by its cover."
- Call-to-action:** Happy Readers Come Back For More

**Pinterest Pin Creation Interface:**

- Board:** Pinterest Musings SSM
- Description:** Images make readers happy. Happy readers means more website traffic. via @scalablesocial
- Image:** A thumbnail image of the blog post photo.
- Buttons:** Post to Twitter, Pin It



TWEET THIS HACK!



PLANNING • • •



WRITING • • •



DESIGN

# *Content Hack #28*

Snag images for your blog with Snagit.



Kelly Kranz

Content Manager

OverGo Studio

@KellyKranz

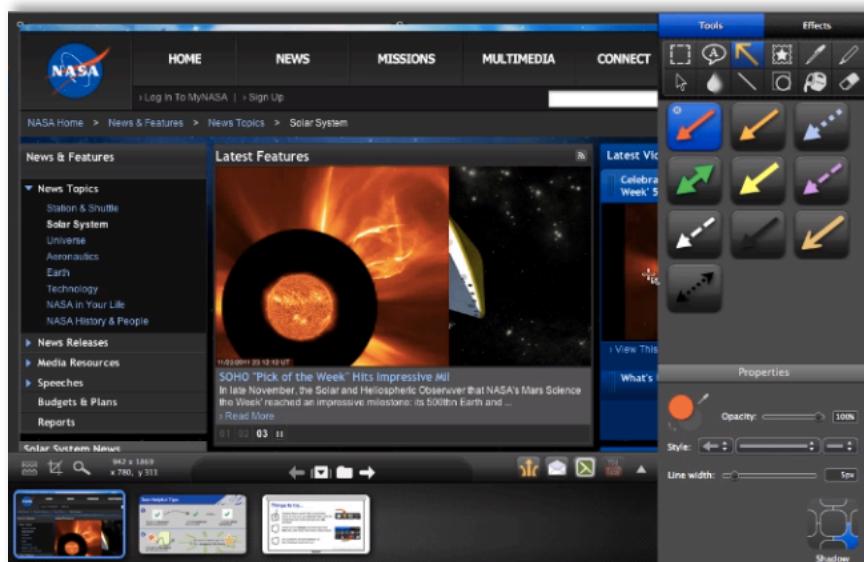


TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #28



I crop graphs, data, relevant quotes, and pictures using [Snagit](#). Snagit is a screenshot program that captures video display and audio output. I use it as a quick way to incorporate relevant and timely graphics into my blog articles. For example, if I'm blogging and want to reference a tweet, I simply "Snagit," then copy and paste it into my article as a .PNG. It's quick, easy, and it jazzes up my articles in a jiffy!



Editor's note: You can also [embed a tweet](#) by hovering over it and selecting "More" > "Embed Tweet." Just copy/paste the code into your post's HTML!



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #29

Use a variety of visuals to spice up text-heavy content.



Irene Bearly

Technical Marketing Manager

TREW Marketing

@trewmarketing



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #29



Since white papers, ebooks, and other types of downloadable content can be very text-heavy, keep the readers' interest by visually breaking up the content with quotes, call-out text blocks, and enticing images. Label the pictures, diagrams, and tables with full-sentence descriptions that help summarize the content in case readers scan the material.



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #30

## Remove pesky image backgrounds with Photoshop.



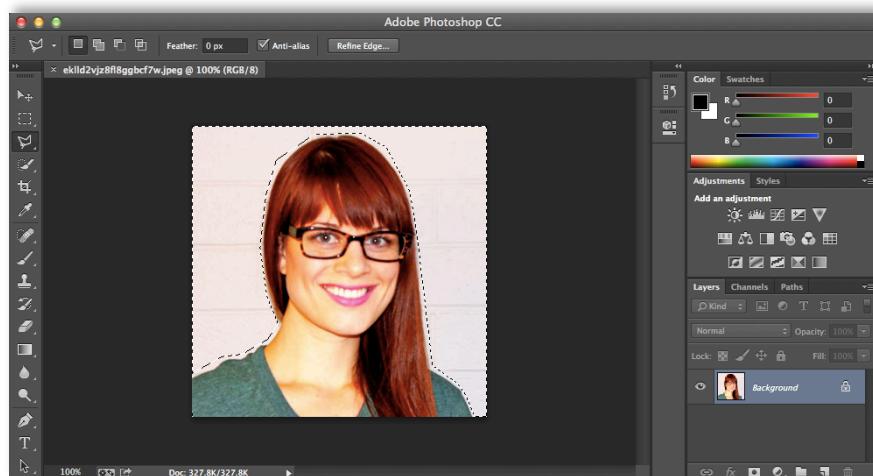
Shannon Johnson  
Content Strategist  
[HubSpot](#)  
[@shannopop](#)



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #30

When I'm creating presentations or ebooks, I often like to remove the background from a photo or image to isolate the subject so that the background doesn't clash with the overall look and feel of the design. I use the [Polygonal Lasso Tool in Photoshop](#) to trace the outline of the subject, then choose Select > Inverse to select the background of the image, then press delete and save as a .PNG file to import into PowerPoint or InDesign.



Editor's note: You can also [remove image backgrounds using PowerPoint](#).



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #31

Add text overlays to your photos with the Over app.



Luke Summerfield

Director of Inbound Marketing

Savvy Panda

@SavvyLuke



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #31

“

It's always a struggle to find quality photos for your content without running into copyright issues. Well, here's an awesome hack/app for creating awe-inspiring content graphics in a snap! The app is called [Over](#) and is available in all app stores for a few dollars. As you're out-and-about around town or at your business, you can be thinking about taking pictures for later use in content. Once you're ready to use it in a piece of content, fire up the app and open up the image. You can then crop the image, play with lighting, and add text and inspiring icons to it. Here are some examples of what you can do with Over:





PLANNING • • •



WRITING • • •



DESIGN

# *Content Hack #32*

Create perfectly sized  
Facebook graphics  
with Canva.



Erik Devaney

Content Strategist

[HubSpot](#)

[@BardOfBoston](#)

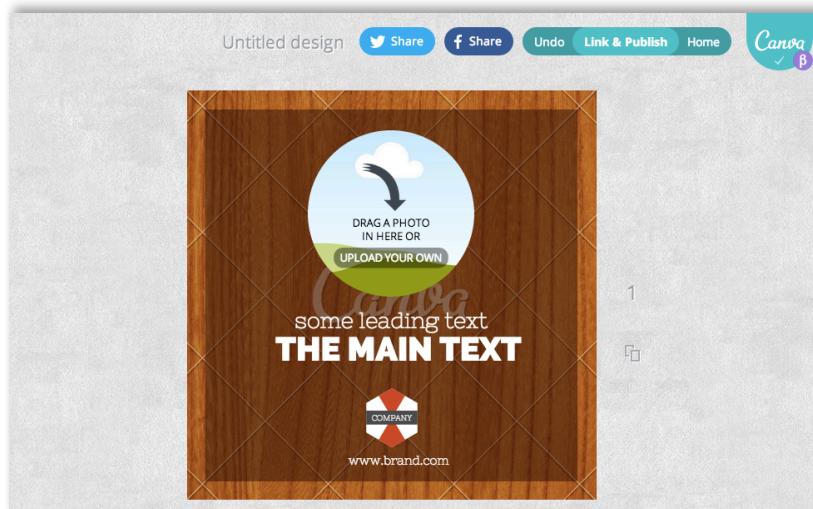


TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #32



You can create perfectly sized Facebook graphics using [Canva](#): a free, easy-to-use alternative to Photoshop. To create a Facebook graphic, you simply choose the “Social Media” design format (800 pixels by 800 pixels), select a background color (or drag in a background pattern), then add text and images and adjust accordingly. For an even simpler solution, you can use one of Canva's pre-designed social media layouts. With a layout, creating a high-quality Facebook graphic can be as easy as tweaking some banner text or replacing a placeholder image.



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #33

Design animated  
messages using  
Sulia Splash.



David Carpenter

Digital Strategist, President

[Connection Model](#)

[@connectionmodel](#)

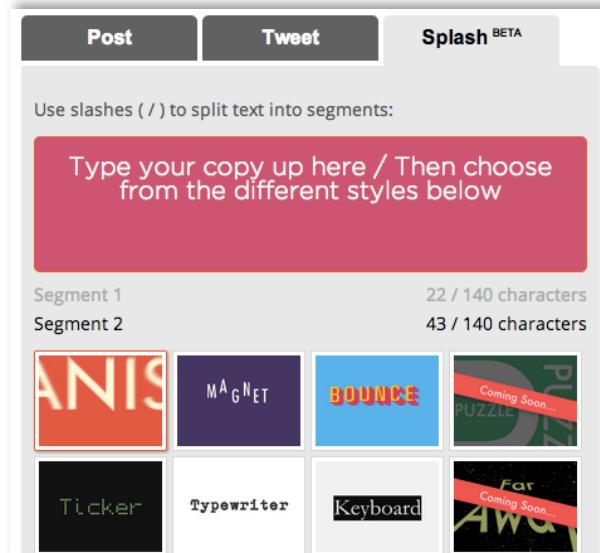


TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #33

“

You can create animated .GIF images that contain text using a new, free tool called [Sulia Splash](#). Just create a free account, click the pencil icon, and choose “Splash.” In my tests, it will create .GIFs that have 500+ layers, providing smooth animation that would take hundreds of dollars using a designer and Photoshop. It's in beta, and you're limited to just 16 characters per line (frame). You can control your lines/frames using the “/” character between phrases, and there are just a few color combinations/styles to choose from at this point.



Editor's note: You can also [create animated .GIFs in Photoshop](#).



TWEET THIS HACK!

# Content Hack #34

Always sketch out  
your ideas.



Tyler Littwin

Senior Graphic Designer

[HubSpot](#)

[@TBLittwin](#)



[TWEET THIS HACK!](#)

# Content Hack #34



Be sketchy! Before starting any design, try doing 12 or more hand-drawn 'thumbnail' versions. Don't worry about the details: focus on the composition, the spacing, relative scale of the elements, etc. Doing these quick versions forces you to think about the basic structure of the design and to think past the first couple of ideas that usually come to mind. If there's time, you can even do a second round of iterations on whichever initial sketch seems most promising. Sketching takes very little time but yields huge results. Sharpen those pencils, amigos.



TWEET THIS HACK!

# COMING UP



*Next*

**Introduction**

Page 2

**Planning Hacks**

Page 4

**Writing Hacks**

Page 29

**Design Hacks**

Page 54

**More Resources**

Page 75

# MORE

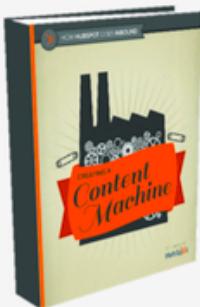


## Resources

There's Always More to Learn!

### CREATE A CONTENT MACHINE

Content is at the foundation of inbound marketing. Learn how to create a content machine like HubSpot in this ebook.



[DOWNLOAD](#)

### DESIGN IT YOURSELF

Marketers can't wait for resources to appear. Download our crash course on visual content creation to start doing, not waiting.



[DOWNLOAD](#)

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Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing." - **Benjamin Franklin**