

Goodreads

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Goodreads is an Amazon company and "social cataloging" website founded in December 2006 and launched in January 2007 by Otis Chandler, a software engineer and entrepreneur, and Elizabeth Chandler.^{[2][3]} The website allows individuals to freely search Goodreads' extensive user-populated database of books, annotations, and reviews. Users can sign up and register books to generate library catalogs and reading lists. They can also create their own groups of book suggestions and discussions. In December 2007, the site had over 650,000 members^[4] and over 10,000,000 books had been added.^[5] As of July 2012, the site reported 10 million members, 20 million monthly visits, and 30 employees.^[6] On July 23, 2013, it was announced on their website that the user base had grown to 20 million members, doubling in close to 11 months.^[7] The website's offices are in San Francisco.^[8]

Goodreads



Web address	www.goodreads.com (https://www.goodreads.com/)
Type of site	Catalog and community
Registration	Free
Available in	English
Owner	Otis Chandler, Amazon.com (from Q2 2013 on)
Created by	Otis Chandler
Launched	December 2006
Alexa rank	▲ 229 ^[1]
Current status	Active

On March 28, 2013, Amazon announced its acquisition of Goodreads for an undisclosed amount.^[9]

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History

Goodreads was created in 2006. Its mission is "to help people find and share books they love... [and] to improve the process of reading and learning throughout the world."^[3] During the first year of business, the company was run without any formal funding. In December 2007, the site received funding estimated at \$750,000 from angel

investors.^[5] This funding lasted Goodreads until 2009, when Goodreads received two million dollars from True Ventures.^[10] In October 2010 the company opened its API, which enabled developers to access its ratings and titles.^[11] Goodreads also receives a small commission when a user clicks over from its site to an online bookseller and makes a purchase.^[2]

In 2011, Goodreads acquired Discoverreads, a book recommendation engine that employs "machine learning algorithms to analyze which books people might like, based on books they've liked in the past and books that people with similar tastes have liked."^{[2][12]} After a user has rated twenty books on its five star scale, the site will begin making recommendations. Otis Chandler believes this rating system will be superior to Amazon's, as Amazon's includes books that a user has browsed or purchased as gifts when determining its recommendations.^{[2][12]} Later that year, Goodreads introduced an algorithm to suggest books to registered users and had over five million members.^[13] *The New Yorker's* Macy Halford noted that the algorithm wasn't perfect, with the number of books needed to create a perfect recommendation system being so large that "by the time I'd got halfway there, my reading preferences would have changed and I'd have to start over again."^[14]

In October 2012, Goodreads announced it had grown to 11 million members with 395 million books catalogued and over 20,000 book clubs created by its users.^[15] Only one month later, in November 2012, Goodreads had surpassed 12 million members, with the member base doubling in one year.^[16]

Amazon.com announced in March 2013 that it reached an agreement to acquire Goodreads in the second quarter of 2013 for an undisclosed sum.^{[17][18][19]}

Features

On the Goodreads website, users can add books to their personal bookshelves, rate and review books, see what their friends are reading, participate in discussion boards and groups on a variety of topics, and get suggestions for future reading choices based on their reviews of previously read books.^[20] Once a user has added friends to his profile, he will see the friends' shelves and reviews and can comment on friends' pages. Goodreads features a rating system of one to five stars, with the option of accompanying the rating with a written review. The site provides default bookshelves—read, currently-reading, to-read—and the opportunity to create customized shelves to categorize a user's books.^[21] It also offers quizzes and trivia, quotations, and book lists. Members can receive the regular newsletter of new books, suggestions, author interviews, and poetry. If a user has written a work, the work can be linked on the author's profile page, which also includes an author's blog.^[22] Goodreads organizes offline opportunities as well, such as IRL book exchanges and "literary pub crawls".^[23]

The website facilitates reader interactions with authors through the interviews, giveaways, authors' blogs, and profile information. There is also a special section for authors with suggestions on promoting their works on the Goodreads site, aimed at helping them reach their target audience.^[24] Already "Seventeen thousand authors, including James Patterson and Margaret Atwood, use Goodreads to advertise."^[2]

In addition, Goodreads has a presence on Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, and other social networking sites.^{[25][26][27]} In addition to having a presence, linking a Goodreads account with an account like Facebook enables the ability to import contacts from Facebook to Goodreads, expanding your Goodreads "Friends" list.

There are settings available, as well, to allow Goodreads to post straight to a Facebook account which informs Facebook friends what one is reading or how one rated a book. This constant linkage from Goodreads to other social networking sites keeps information flowing and connectivity continuous.^[28]

The Amazon Kindle Paperwhite 1 and 2 feature integration with Goodreads' social network via a user interface button.^[29]

Future growth

Otis Chandler told TechCrunch in August 2012 that Goodreads would be "building more features allowing readers to update their profiles as they read a book" and was "talking to the Facebook team about building book clubs within the social network."^[25] He felt that a major reason for the recent growth in members was Goodreads' new Facebook Open Graph app.^[25]

Readers Choice Awards

The Readers Choice Awards is a yearly award program, first launched on Goodreads in 2009. Users are able to nominate books of their choosing, released in the given year. The final voting round collects the top ten books from twenty different categories.^[30] The 25 2012 winners included *The Casual Vacancy* by J.K. Rowling for Best Fiction, *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn for Best Mystery & Thriller, *The Light Between Oceans* by M.L. Stedman for Best Historical Fiction,^[31] and *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green for Young Adult Fiction.^[32]

Criticism and controversy

In January 2012, Goodreads switched from using Amazon's public Product Advertising API for book information such as title, author, and number of pages to book wholesaler Ingram.^[33] Goodreads felt Amazon's requirements for using its API were too restrictive, and the combination of Ingram, the Library of Congress, and other sources would be more flexible. However, some users worried that their reading records would be lost. Goodreads had a number of plans in place to ease the transition and ensure that no data was lost, even for titles that might be in danger of deletion or books available only through Amazon, such as Kindle editions and self-published works on Amazon.^[33] However, after Amazon acquired Goodreads, Goodreads began using their book data again.^[34]

Goodreads has come under criticism from users over the availability and tone of reviews posted on the site, with some users and websites stating that certain reviewers were harassing and encouraging attacks on authors.^{[35][36]} Goodreads publicly posted their review guidelines in August 2012 to address these issues.^[37] In September 2013, Goodreads announced a new anti-bullying policy which authorized the removal of abusive content throughout the site, sparking a great deal of controversy among authors and readers.^[38] Several news sources reported the announcement, noting Amazon's business reasons for the move:

Where authors were threatening a mass account cancellation to protest the bullying, many of the reader users who commented on the announcement are now threatening the same thing. And while much of this might seem like nothing more than petty playground behavior between children who honestly do not have a clear good guy or bad guy, keep in mind that several ebook retailers

incorporate the Goodreads' API into their sales pages, effectively posting book reviews that many in the Goodreads community know to be false, and nothing more than an act of revenge against an author; real-world sales decisions have been made by consumers based on these reviews.

—Mercy Pilkington, *Good E-Reader News*^[39]

See also

- aNobii
- BookArmy
- Bookish
- Discogs.com
- douban
- iDreamBooks
- LibraryThing
- Shelfari

Footnotes

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External links

- Goodreads official site (<https://www.goodreads.com>)
- Goodreads official blog (<https://www.goodreads.com/blog/index>)

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