

Online Book Clubs

Maxwell Memorial Library's Technology Class
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0 Introduction

Often after you've read a book that you really enjoyed, you want to discuss it with other people who've also read it. That impulse has long been one of the motives people have had in forming or joining book discussion groups.

Maxwell has two fine groups that meet here monthly, but what if your niche reading isn't part of the focus of either group? Well, just like Facebook and other social media apps let you keep in touch with far-flung friends, there are sites on the Internet that host book discussion groups on all sorts of topics, eras, genres, authors, and so on.

We'll approach online book clubs from 2 angles:

1. Finding online discussion groups or forums that already exist and
2. Setting a club up from scratch.

1 Existing online discussion groups

1.1 Finding groups

Here are some links to sites that offer already-established book discussion groups:

- [Goodreads](https://www.goodreads.com/group) at <https://www.goodreads.com/group>
- [Library Thing](https://www.librarything.com/groups) at <https://www.librarything.com/groups>
- [Online Book Club](https://onlinebookclub.org/) at <https://onlinebookclub.org/>

1.2 How do I join a group?

If you just want to **LURK**¹ in a group at any of the 3 sites above, you can click on the links for any discussion topics that look interesting. To join in the discussion, though, you'll first need

1 **LURKING** is reading comments posted in the group without actively participating in the discussion.

It is generally considered a good idea to lurk for a while before posting to any forum or group on the internet so that you get a feel for the sense of the discussion before contributing your \$0.02. Even if you officially join the group immediately upon learning of it, lurking for a while before joining in will probably serve you well.

to register with the website. Signing up is free at all 3 sites.²

For active participation, only Goodreads requires that you actually join the specific discussion group by clicking the **JOIN GROUP** button.

In Library Thing, you only are required to click on **JOIN THIS GROUP** to join private groups.

Online Book Club is much less structured than the other 2, so once you find a forum (or, more likely, sub-forum) on a genre you're interested in, you can join in the discussion without any registration beyond the initial sign up with the site as a whole.

2 Setting a book club up from scratch

C.P. Hoffman has a rather thorough article about setting a book club up at <https://bookriot.com/2017/09/06/setting-up-your-own-online-book-club/>

Here are some links for platforms where groups of this sort can be set up:

- [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/groups/) at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/>
- [Google Groups](https://groups.google.com/forum/) at <https://groups.google.com/forum/>

Additionally, both Goodreads and Library thing let you start groups.

At the other end of the spectrum, a club could have a fixed time to meet but in an online chat session instead of around a spatial table.

- [Google Hangouts](https://hangouts.google.com/) (see <https://hangouts.google.com/>)
- [Skype](https://www.skype.com/) (see <https://www.skype.com/>)

3 Resources

3.1 Articles

Hoffman, C.P. (2017-09-06). [A Book riot guide to setting up your own online book club](https://bookriot.com/2017/09/06/setting-up-your-own-online-book-club/), *Book riot*. Retrieved from <https://bookriot.com/2017/09/06/setting-up-your-own-online-book-club/>

Ahlin, Charlotte. (2018-02-02). [14 Online book clubs you can join right now](https://www.bustle.com/p/14-online-book-clubs-you-can-join-right-now-8088085), *Bustle*. Retrieved from <https://www.bustle.com/p/14-online-book-clubs-you-can-join-right-now-8088085>

² If you decide you want to use Library Thing to catalog your library and you catalog over 200 books, you'll need a paid membership.