Twitter Thread by Pat Walls
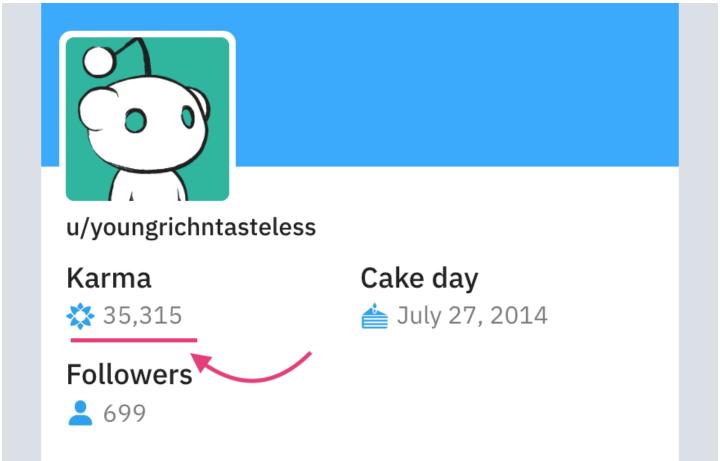
Pat Walls
@thepatwalls

How I auto-share ~120 blog posts to Reddit every month, reached 35k karma, and gotten millions of views.

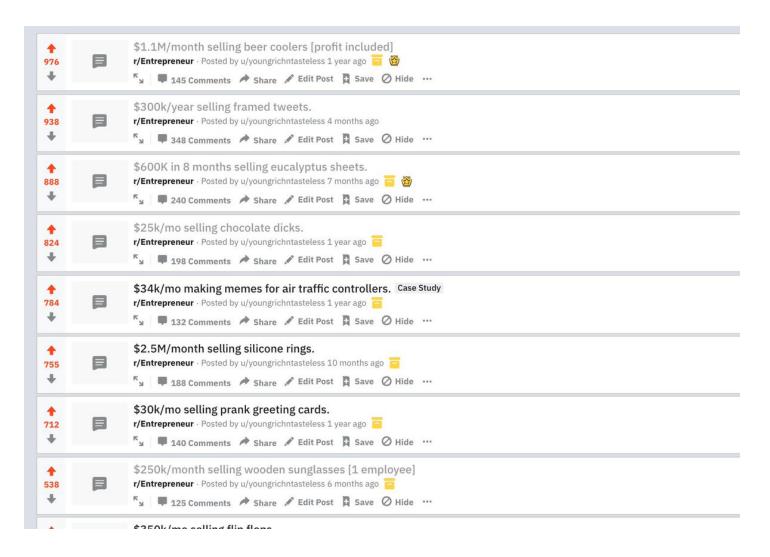**And why I love building automation so much!**

A thread!

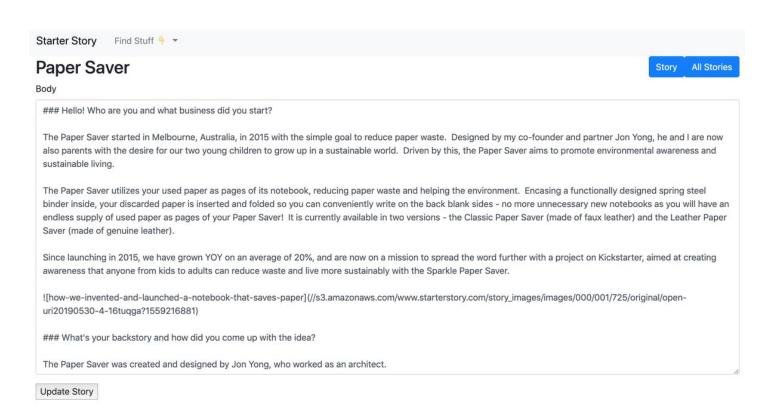I have hit the top of Reddit hundreds of times.

Through all of the love and hate that I get on the platform, I think I've found that it's here to stay.

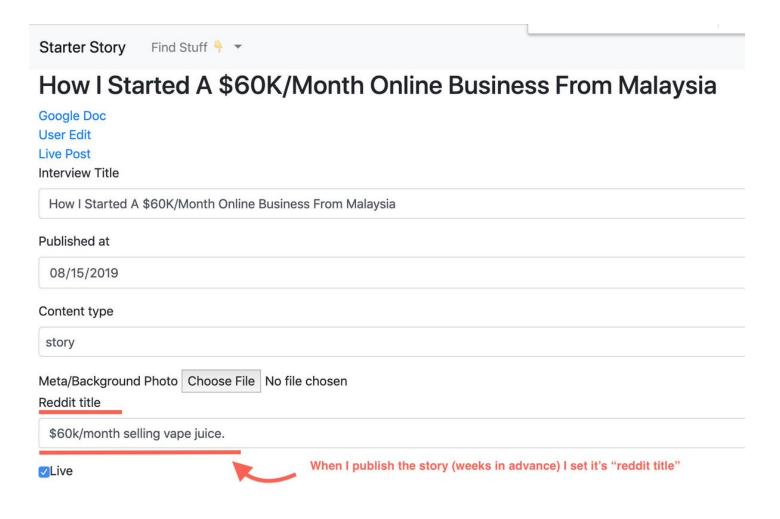After years of posting on Reddit, I've slowly built an automated system that is now 100% hands off.

This is my Starter Story backend, where I save the content of my stories in a markdown format.

This is great for Reddit because Reddit is also in a markdown format!

While I edit and publish starter stories, I set the "reddit title" in advance.

This is so I don't really ever have to think about it again. Once that's set, the system knows it should post this one to reddit, and that should be the title.

Starter Story   Find Stuff 📌 ▾

How I Started A $60K/Month Online Business From Malaysia

Google Doc
User Edit
Live Post
Interview Title

> How I Started A $60K/Month Online Business From Malaysia

Published at

> 08/15/2019

Content type

> story

Meta/Background Photo Choose File No file chosen
Reddit title

> $60k/month selling vape juice.

☑ Live   ← **When I publish the story (weeks in advance) I set it's "reddit title"**

I also create a "Reddit intro" and "outro"

Although the content of the blog post is stored in my database, I still should introduce myself in the Reddit post.

I use other variables in my database to construct this.

```
def reddit_intro_text(story)
  "Hey - Pat from [StarterStory.com](https://www.starterstory.com) here with another interview.

Today's interview is with #{story.starter.name}#{story.starter.reddit_username.present? ? " (/u/#{story.starter.reddit_username})" : ""}

**Some stats:**

* Product: #{story.business.description}
* #{story.business.measurement&.capitalize}: #{number_to_currency(story.business.revenue, precision: 0)}
* Started: #{story.business.business_started_at&.strftime("%B %Y")}
* Location: #{story.business.location}
* Founders: #{story.business.num_founders}
* Employees: #{story.business.num_employees}\n\n"
  end

  def reddit_outro_text(story)
    "\n\n---

Liked this text interview? Check out the [full interview with photos](#{story_url_with_deprecated(story)})."
  end
```

I even tag the Reddit user (just recently starting tracking this data in my database) as they will get a notification when their post goes up.

This (and other data) is filled out when the interviewee is plugging all their info.

```
 another interview.

.present? ? " (/u/#{story.starter.reddit_username})" : ""} of
```

Here's another fun thing.

Reddit has an algorithm that will "shadow ban" (google it) your posts if you have certain links.

I have a list of links that I will strip from the markdown automatically:

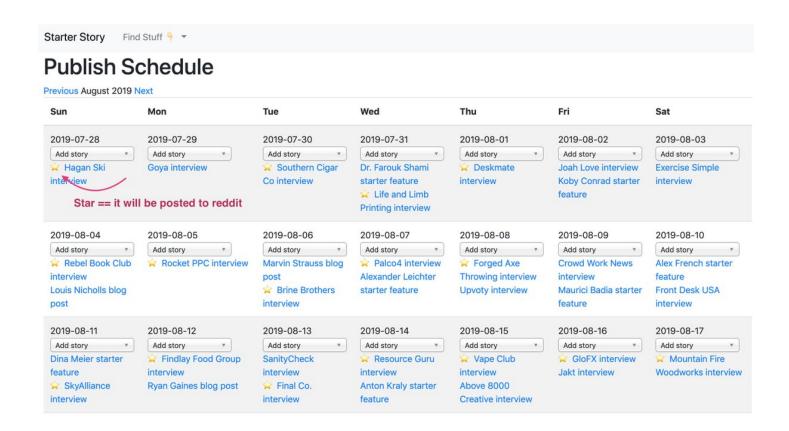(this list has been built from trial and error mostly)

```ruby
class Reddit < ApplicationRecord
  BLACKLISTED_DOMAINS = [
    "shopify.com",
    "apps.shopify.com",
    "amazon.com",
    "starterstory.com",
    "squarespace.com",
    "mailchimp.com",
    "shipstation.com",
    "google.com",
    "klaviyo.com",
    "etsy.com",
    "intuit.com",
    "rechargepayments.com",
    "basecamp.com",
    "goldmansachs.com",
    "gimletmedia.com",
    "slack.com",
    "streak.com",
    "lastpass.com",
    "judge.me",
    "boldcommerce.com",
    "audible.com",
    "evernote.com",
    "wordpress.com",
    "woocommerce.com",
    "codecanyon.net",
    "woowaitlist.com",
    "tawk.to",
    "activecampaign.com",
    "magento.com",
    "canva.com",
    "mixpanel.com"
```

I also need to make sure we only post one story per day to Reddit. Maybe one day I will increase this.

This is our content calendar.

When you see a■■that means it will be automatically posted to Reddit.

This content calendar allows us to schedule WEEKS in advance with stories.

Starter Story   Find Stuff 📌 ▾

Publish Schedule

Previous August 2019 Next

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2019-07-28 Add story ▾ ⭐ Hagan Ski interview Star == it will be posted to reddit	2019-07-29 Add story ▾ Goya interview	2019-07-30 Add story ▾ ⭐ Southern Cigar Co interview	2019-07-31 Add story ▾ Dr. Farouk Shami starter feature ⭐ Life and Limb Printing interview	2019-08-01 Add story ▾ ⭐ Deskmate interview	2019-08-02 Add story ▾ Joah Love interview Koby Conrad starter feature	2019-08-03 Add story ▾ Exercise Simple interview
2019-08-04 Add story ▾ ⭐ Rebel Book Club interview Louis Nicholls blog post	2019-08-05 Add story ▾ ⭐ Rocket PPC interview	2019-08-06 Add story ▾ Marvin Strauss blog post ⭐ Brine Brothers interview	2019-08-07 Add story ▾ ⭐ Palco4 interview Alexander Leichter starter feature	2019-08-08 Add story ▾ ⭐ Forged Axe Throwing interview Upvoty interview	2019-08-09 Add story ▾ Crowd Work News interview Maurici Badia starter feature	2019-08-10 Add story ▾ Alex French starter feature Front Desk USA interview
2019-08-11 Add story ▾ Dina Meier starter feature ⭐ SkyAlliance interview	2019-08-12 Add story ▾ ⭐ Findlay Food Group interview Ryan Gaines blog post	2019-08-13 Add story ▾ SanityCheck interview ⭐ Final Co. interview	2019-08-14 Add story ▾ ⭐ Resource Guru interview Anton Kraly starter feature	2019-08-15 Add story ▾ ⭐ Vape Club interview Above 8000 Creative interview	2019-08-16 Add story ▾ ⭐ GloFX interview Jakt interview	2019-08-17 Add story ▾ ⭐ Mountain Fire Woodworks interview

Then, once a day, a worker runs that will post that story to 4 different subreddits (you can see which ones in screenshot)

I run these at 15 minute intervals to avoid tripping any spam things.

Here's the code. Just a few lines.

```ruby
def perform
  return unless Rails.env.production?

  ["entrepreneur", "EntrepreneurRideAlong", "business_ideas", "starter_story"].each_with_index do |subreddit, idx|
    stories_published_today.each do |story|
      next if story.reddit_title.blank? && subreddit != "starter_story"

      title = story.reddit_title.present? ? story.reddit_title : generate_reddit_title(story)
      text = reddit_full_text(story)

      RedditWorker.perform_at((Time.now + (idx * 15).minutes), subreddit, title, text)
    end
  end
end
```
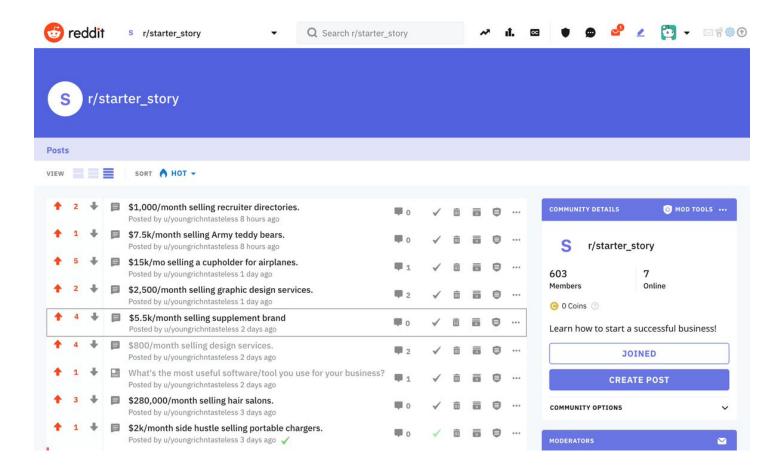
I also started my own subreddit!

https://t.co/wkIMCyNfw3

I post ALL stories there, and we just passed 600 members. Small, but growing a little every day :)

In addition to stripping blacklisted links for the reddit post, I also do a few other things:

- strip out affiliate link params
- remove blockquotes
- add links for the images

This gives the post a "less bloggy" feel IMO.

To be honest, I did not know what I wanted to do after graduating from the bootcamp. I had been vaping for about 3 years (this was in 2015) and the vaping industry was just going through an explosive phase of growth. So I thought, why not?

I managed to validated the subscription box idea for about 50USD. All I did was build a two step landing page using a free tool like Unbounce that "sells" the subscription box product. When visitors click buy now, they get sent to an opt in page saying that we've "sold out" due to "overwhelming demand". To get in front of the imaginary queue that I've created, they'd have to share the links with 5 friends. This campaign was a success as we've achieved more than 30% conversion rates. Here's a screenshot of the 2-step landing page.

Here's the landing page that "sells" the product.

image

Upon clicking on the "Sign Up" button, we lead them to this page to collect their contact information.

image

The reason behind this is because I didn't have an ad budget for validating the service and I had to get creative. There were a few vape expos happening at that time and we got in touch with the organizers offering them a swap, where I provide web development services for their event in exchange for emails of the attendees. That's how we got our initial leads. ;)

The automation timeline!

This has all been a process:

1. at first I manually posted and found what works
2. then i set reminders to do it
3. then i built the code that writes the intro (copy/paste)
4. then i configured the API

5. then i made it so i could just click "post to reddit"
6. then i created the worker

This is high level, but I slowly did this and tweaked over the last year. Many bumps in the road.

Automating things is an iterative process!!!!

The benefits of automating?

Other than the obvious benefits (save time/money) the biggest benefit is that I'm not constantly checking Reddit anymore, seeing how upvotes are going, seeing the latest hater comments, etc.

I'll often check the site and find my post hitting the front page and I had no idea!

Anyways, that's it. Hope you found something interesting out my fun little automation.

Even though it's simple, I'm proud of it!

Happy to answer any questions. What do you think of this?