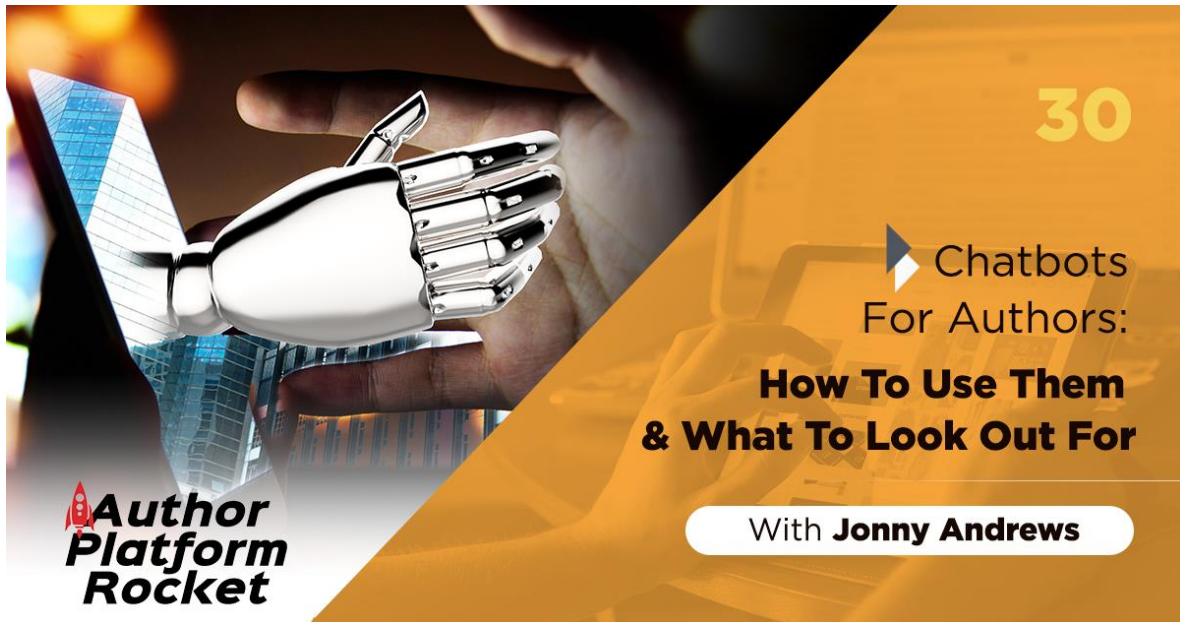


**Author Platform Rocket
-Podcast Transcription-**



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Voiceover:

Welcome to Author Platform Rocket, the highly acclaimed source for actionable business, marketing, and mindset strategy for authors, delivered in 20 minutes or less, most of the time. In other words, this is how you sell more books, while building a bigger fan base, the right way. Here's your host and author, marketing veteran, Johnny Andrews.

Johnny Andrews:

Hello party people. Welcome to the Author Platform Rocket. Today, we are going to discuss something that has been at the tip of the lips of so many folks. People have been asking myself, and we've been getting lots of folks in the agency going, "Hey. What about chat bots? Aren't these things the latest, greatest, coolest, thing to ever happen to anyone ever?" Well, maybe. Let's talk about, shall we? Here we go.

Chat bots for the author folk. Today, I'm going to talk to both nonfiction as well fiction. I want to dive into some realities surrounding marketing things. Chat bot, what exactly is a chat bot? A chat bot is something inside of Facebook. It's a little machine, something like manychat.com, that connects to your messenger on your page, and it's an autoresponder, if you will. People come to your page, and they say a certain thing, and it replies with a link, or a story, or whatever you program it to send. It just automates pieces of your page chatting and stuff like that.

Now, there's some good stuff to this, is that, obviously, if you do it right, it can heighten your response time and people are happy with it, because they get the information before they even ask for it. It's also a marketing tool, because sometimes people aren't as willing to give you their email in a normal situation, but maybe they'll chat with your page. Now, the interesting thing about this is, inside of the advertising, there are some benefits to this. Number one, let's say you're going to do a promotion. Let's say you're running a promotion for a book, or some discount on your backend product, or something like that, and you program it so that if somebody types in, "Yay! Sale," it sends them this secret clever link right to it, and they can buy, and that's awesome. You can retarget people that maybe don't buy, if you are running stuff through your own page.

There's a dark side to this. I want to jump into this now, because, well, it's important. I'm a big fan of predicting the future by looking at the past. It's not a matter of when Facebook changes the rules on chat bots ... I'm sorry, it's not a matter of if they do, it's a matter of when they do. Let's look at how this works. You're not getting any of the data of these people. You're not. You can chat with them, of course, but maybe they'll see it, maybe they won't. Maybe they'll block you, maybe they won't. I, personally, find them annoying, but I use them because it is a marketing tool.

Here's what's happening, is Facebook's giving you another way to spend money with them, because if you're not capturing the actual data, meaning if you don't know who this person is outside of the context of Facebook, and you could only chat with them through Facebook, that sets up an interesting dynamic. Right now, what's happening is, when you send a message, if you send it to a group of people, they all get it, and a large percentage of them open it. That's the big, "Yay!", is that it's a way higher open rate than something like email, because, obviously, everybody has email, and so it's like that old tactic that everyone's like, "Meh." It's also the best one, because you actually have that data.

Now, what's probably going to happen in the not so distant future is that, that reach is going to be throttled, because it's a huge opportunity. It is exactly the same thing that Facebook did before they went public, where they were like, "Hey! Run some like campaigns and build up these huge fan bases on your pages," when they had organic reach. Remember that, like 300 years ago, back when you could post something and everybody saw it? I know. What happened? Well, what happened was they had to make money, so Facebook stopped being a social media platform, and they transformed, almost without changing anything, into a social advertising platform. Chat bots and the ability to do this is just another version of that. Essentially, Facebook is doing the exact same thing they did right before they throttled organic reach, which is, "Hey, build up big audiences in this place on our website, and we will reward you with amazing reach," until they stop rewarding you with amazing reach.

Here's the problem with chat bots. Should you use them? If you want to. Absolutely please do. They're very cool. In fact, they work very well right now. However, be prepared. You need to be prepared. You need to be always doing something where you're pushing people from the chat, pushing them into some form of getting their data, whether that's a free report, or a free video, or some sort of whatever, or a webinar, or whatever you're doing, where they register with you and they put in their name, and email address, and hopefully, phone number. If you're not doing that, you're not building a business. All you're doing is building like a pile of humans inside of Facebook, again. Remember, we predict the future by looking at what has happened.

Same thing with Amazon. You can predict the future by looking at what they've done previously, because they're always going to do what is in their best interest. Facebook, it is in their best interest right now to be able to promote these chat bots, and to be able to say, "Yeah, you should use this stuff. It's going to be awesome."

Soon enough, what you'll start seeing ... Well, two things. Naturally, over time, the responsiveness is going to drop off, because it's just like everything. After it's been out a while, and it's no longer new, then people are like, "Okay." That is just a normal progression, where you don't have the same sort of power that you did at the very beginning. That's called business. That doesn't mean you abandon it. I mean, what it means is that most people who don't get this will abandon it. Then, all of a sudden, it's just you and a couple other people. You have this whole room to yourselves. It's really neat. That's what it's been like, a lot of marketing circles and whatnot. Just keep in mind, please, please, please, keep in mind that sooner or later there will come a change where Facebook will make it not as easy and more expensive for you to be using this kind of stuff.

Now, something like ManyChat is great. It's very cool. I used it to promote a program that actually, it was really funny, it had no name. I took a couple of students live and I showed them how to set up their own websites so that they could sell their books through their own websites, and therefore, keep their own buyer data. One of our students, [Veladay 00:06:15], who has been amazing with this, actually made a couple hundred bucks, from what I remember, very quickly with this. There's a method to the madness with that. Can you do the same thing with a chat bot? Probably. Probably you could. It's not a terrible idea to have it, because you can create a custom audience based on people who have engaged with your bot, and then you could clone them into a lookalike audience and market to them, send different marketing messages. I love it as a marketing platform, but I am also hyper aware that it is a marketing platform. That's the big difference, is when you have the expectations going into this ahead of time, then it's not quite so starry eyed and whooo.

My biggest concern, early on, I no longer am concerned about this, is that Facebook does not want that kind of automation. It actually turns out they do. At first, it looked like these are weird super awkward robots that are chatting with people. That is not a thing that Facebook normally promote, "Hey. Come use this on our platform." It's not really that.

Now, here's another thing to consider. I've spoken to a number of authors that came into it with, "Oh, this is just like an autoresponder. I should upload messages to my people and have them sent out over time." That is pointless. Don't do that. Do not look at this like an autoresponder. For exactly the reasons that I just rattled off, that you don't keep the data. It's just another way for you to build an audience on Facebook that they will eventually take away from you and make you pay them for the privilege of marketing to the people that you marketing to get in the first place. That is simply a reality. You just have to accept it. That's who they are. That's what they do. That is in their best interest.

Don't get mad at them for it. Just be like, "All right. I know this is coming, and so I'm going to ..." If you want to do a special promo, super smart. Let me give you an idea, all right? Let's say you have a book, fiction, non-fiction, I don't care. Let's say it sells for \$4.99 on Amazon, but what you're going to do is you're going to go to your most engaged people, run this to, probably your newsletter, run this to your fans, all that kind of stuff, maybe even in a group. The goal is to be able to, like I said before, this is a real cool pro right now that'll probably change at some point, but you can probably capitalize it now. Just be like, "Hey, listen. This book is normally \$4.99, but if you buy it directly through me, you could have it for \$0.99," and it's a seven-day promo or something like that. You could put that post on your page, boost it to your fans, put that post in your group, pin it to the top, and then hit your newsletter subscribers with this.

What you want to do is you want to be running something with PayPal or with Stripe, where you're going to get their buyer data. This is super important that you start doing this, because if you don't do this and you don't start training your biggest fans to buy directly from you, rather than waiting to get you on those other platforms, you're going to be in a world hurt. This is segueing into some other things that I've talked about before.

What we use is Leadpages.net, the middle option, because you can split pages. You don't have to, but you can. Then, we use BookFunnel to deliver the book. There's a universal link that does not require them to re-opt in. Stripe hooks up directly with LeadPages. It's awesome. Or, you could just sell with a button on your site with Strip. It doesn't matter. Just as long as you are not sending them back to Amazon, or Barnes & Noble, or iBooks, or whatever that is. You want to make stinking sure that you tell them they can read this on their Kindles, because that's where most people are going to read this. By using BookFunnel, they can read it on almost any reading device they choose.

What you do is you drive people to the chat bot. You say, "Hey. I'm going to give you a secret link, if you type the word, secret," or whatever kind of corniness you want to throw in there, "and you can get this book that has all this value and all these reviews," or give them the value behind what the book is, and tell them why you're doing it, and have like, "This is a seven-day sale, because it's a holiday," or, "it's my birthday," or something to that effect. Just give them a reason, and they'll go there.

Next thing you know, low and be freaking hold, guess what's going to happen? Number one, you're going to get the data of people who have actually purchased something from you for once. Yes! It's amazing. This is exactly where the industry needs to be going is getting your buyer data, so you could actually build a business, instead of waiting for it. Holding your breath, waiting for Amazon to update their algorithm, so you get blown out the airlock along with 100,000 other indie authors that watch their money flow down the drain, because no one can discover them anymore. That's just been happening all the time. This is what we've got to do.

If you want to incorporate a chat bot into it, by all means do so, because now you have another point of contact. Once you have these guys, here's another thing you can do. If you're going to release another book, my recommendation, and you can have it up for presale anywhere else, let's say you're going to sell it once again for \$4.99, what you do is you give your readers and your fans, maybe, a five to seven day window where they can buy it directly from you, a little bit early.

This is great, because what you do is you unpublish it, then, from your site, if you want to use Kindle Select. Yeah, if you want to be in Kindle Unlimited and that kind of stuff, and then maximize page reads, and stuff like that, what you can do then is unpublish the book from your website the day before your other book goes live, so you're not in violation of the terms of service or anything like that. Then, publish it to Kindle and tell everybody else, "Hey! We're live. Go get it." You train your people, who know, like, and trust you already. It's hard to get people to buy off your own website. Or, it's harder, I should say, because you've spent the past however many years training them to go to Amazon and do that. Literally, the entirety of the author industry is training everybody to buy directly from Amazon, which is completely awesome, but now it's becoming very dangerous to the longevity of your career. Toys R Us being a case in point, and stuff like that.

I've mentioned these points before on other shows. Also, on the Facebook page, if you go to [Facebook.com/authorplatformrocket](https://www.facebook.com/authorplatformrocket), you can very much listen to me doing some Facebook Lives. I go on these mini epic rants about this. You need to be keeping your buyer data, especially with chat bots. Keep this all under that one theme of chat bots. It's very important that you keep in mind exactly what that is and where it's probably going. I would give that to the tune of 90% that, eventually, if

enough people start using it, they're going to throttle the organic reach of the chats that you can broadcast to these people and make you pay to get all the way there, to make sure that every inbox, or messenger, whatever it is, sees what you're saying. That's a very high probability that, that's going to happen.

Keep in mind, yes, chat bots can be great. No, do not turn them into your personal autoresponder. You can program them to respond to a conversation, but what you have to do with it is you have to make sure that the person chatting with the bot is using the correct keywords. It's usually a good idea to guide them in there, like, "Hey, if you want to get this thing, chat this," or, "If you'd like to know this, chat this." Then, the bot can respond accordingly.

They are cool. There's nuances and cool little features to them, and things like that. Like I said, it's great to be able to build an audience that you can then market to. You better keep in mind, and I'm going to keep saying this, you better keep in mind that it is a temporary thing, that it's going to be so cool for so long, and that if you're not looking at the big picture, you're going to get blown out of the airlock. Don't come crying to me, if in three years from now, Facebook is like, "Oh. You know all these bots? No. We're not going to let you reach all of them unless you pay us. It'll be a dollar per person," or something like that. CPM, good old CPM model. Pay \$100 and you can hit your 1,000 chat bot subscribers.

that's how you do it. Once again, to do a quick little recap on how this would play out is, you would post something where, "Hey, listen. Type this in the comments," or message the page kind of thing, post that to your fans, boost the post, run that as an ad directly to your fans so that only those people are going to get it, because they're going to be the most likely to respond to you. Post it in whatever group you're hosting, or that's linked to whatever it is that you're doing. Then, have it be some cool super sale, where you actually get your fans and readers to buy directly from you, so that you can capture buyer data. Make sure you're using the Facebook pixel, and so it fires the whole sale conversion, so that you can get that data. You can then bid for that in the future, if you want to do those things. That's how it all works together. You're going to get the best stuff off of each piece, when you look at it from more of a top down marketing model, rather than you're just like, "Chat bot."

Chat bot is not a self-contained solution. It's just a like a book for someone that has a business. It is a piece of your marketing. It is not the business in of itself. One of the consulting clients we have is an airline pilot. Awesome guy, and he's coming along beautifully. He has a book, but he does not have a business. We're helping him create that business from the book, because the book is actually irrelevant until you have the business. When you realize that, you start looking at the world through a different lens. That lens is chat bot is a piece of your marketing funnel, it is not the

beginning and the end. You don't give up on email because now you've got the chat bot. That's what it very much sounds like when a lot of authors get going on these things. It's like, "Oh, I can give this up." It's like, no. No you don't. You just add another piece into your marketing thing.

If you have the brain space to do it, it's not all that tough. You can definitely do it, but there needs to be a point to it, where you use it as a comprehensive piece of your marketing, not an end in of itself. Hopefully, that made sense.

Are chat bots good or bad? They are neither. It depends on how you use them, but expect them to get throttled, just like Facebook throttled everything else, sometimes in the future, and expect it to become thing that you have to pay for a lot more than you probably are right now. All right? I'm Johnny Andrews. That's what we got for today. I will see you in the next episode.

All right, that does it for another round of authorplatformrocket.com. Remember, we're here to help you with your business marketing and mindset. If you have a question, want us to cover a topic, or interview a special guest, just shoot over an email to show@authorplatformrocket.com. As always, we need your reviews and support. If you like what you're hearing, please leave us a glowing review on iTunes and forward the show to an author friend who might need the love and assistance. Most importantly, if you're an author who needs help with marketing, why not let us do it for you? Check us out at authorplatformrocket.com, always affordable, effective, done for you author marketing, so you can get back to writing your books. I'm Johnny Andrews. That's it for today. I'll see you on the next show.

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