

Who needs book reviews?

Marketing books is tough. So many get published and in order to make a profit, the publishers have to sell quite a number. Good reviews help tremendously. Word of mouth, author talks, buzz...all help to sell a book. If an author is not established, he/she faces a long road ahead. Of course, an Oprah review catapults any book to the top of the heap. Today, however, I saw a posting on Craig's List that really amazed me. An author is trying to create buzz/readership for his book via social networking. The deal is that you write him, he sends you a copy of his book and you review and share it with your social network and his social network. According to him, the return is that you make lots of new contacts, and obviously for him, the return is that he gets you and your contacts as potential book buyers and some self-created buzz. I haven't seen it before but I bet this is the new it thing to do for book publishers and writers. Increasingly, we are skipping the middleperson and going to the masses. Is this really what Web 2.0 is aiming for? If you've read Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point*, you know that the mavens are the ones who have the info who they pass to the salespeople who in turn use connectors to get the word out to a larger audience. I can see it now—through Twitter hundreds of people get updated that so and so just read It Book and they now can get on their iPhone and order it directly from Amazon. The book shoots up the charts and now we have a new bestseller.