

How to Start A Story Swap

By Craig "Hackin Boo" Harrison www.HackinBoo.com

Manifest Your Own Creation Story! Here's how to start a Story Swap.

In the Beginning...

1. The right location is key: one that's available and accessible the same time each month. Seek a private room, ample parking, near public transportation. Check libraries, cafés, museums, community centers and affordable restaurants.
2. Pick a time/day that doesn't conflict with other swaps or local events.
3. Create a compelling name for your swap! Your identity may also explain who you are, where you meet.
4. Create a flyer, brochure, poster and business cards or postcards to spread the word.
5. Locally: walk the neighborhoods and talk up your swap, inviting one and all.
6. City-wide: Post materials at libraries, recreation & community centers, city hall, bulletin boards, telephone poles, in free local newspapers listings, online calendars (ex. www.craigslist.org) and with other association/guild publications (print/web).

The Art of the Start

7. Disseminate a press release announcing the swap's launch. Mail/e-mail it to local media; follow up by phone.
8. Partner with local swaps to spread the word, show support and solicit future guest tellers.
9. Build a mailing/e-mailing list to promote past & future swaps.
10. A website with photos, sound & video is key. Put its URL on all your material!

11. Use a guest book to capture guests' names, phones and/or e-mail addresses and follow up.

Swap Talk

12. Host an inaugural Open House (and again annually) with food and a special program.
13. Regularly showcase guest tellers, theme meetings and tie-ins to local events to build buzz.
14. Contact local papers to generate a feature story about storytelling for adults and what's unique about your swap. Cultivate media relationships.
15. Contact local senior centers, adult schools, recreation centers and civic groups to spread the word.
16. Offer storytellers for other group's events. Tellers, in turn, can promote your swap through their performances and swap flyers/brochures.
17. Stage an annual super-swap where local swaps join forces for a tour-de-force event to attract new members.
18. Now, celebrate your swap's success. Tout all its anniversaries and tell its creation story annually of how it came to be!



Photo of Do Tell! Swap in Santa Rosa, co-founded by Kenneth Foster (pictured) and Elaine Stanley

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Berkeley based Storyteller and leader Craig "Hackin Boo" Harrison has created special interest groups, clubs, events, communities, and even inspired a movement. Share your swap creation stories with him through www.HackinBoo.com.