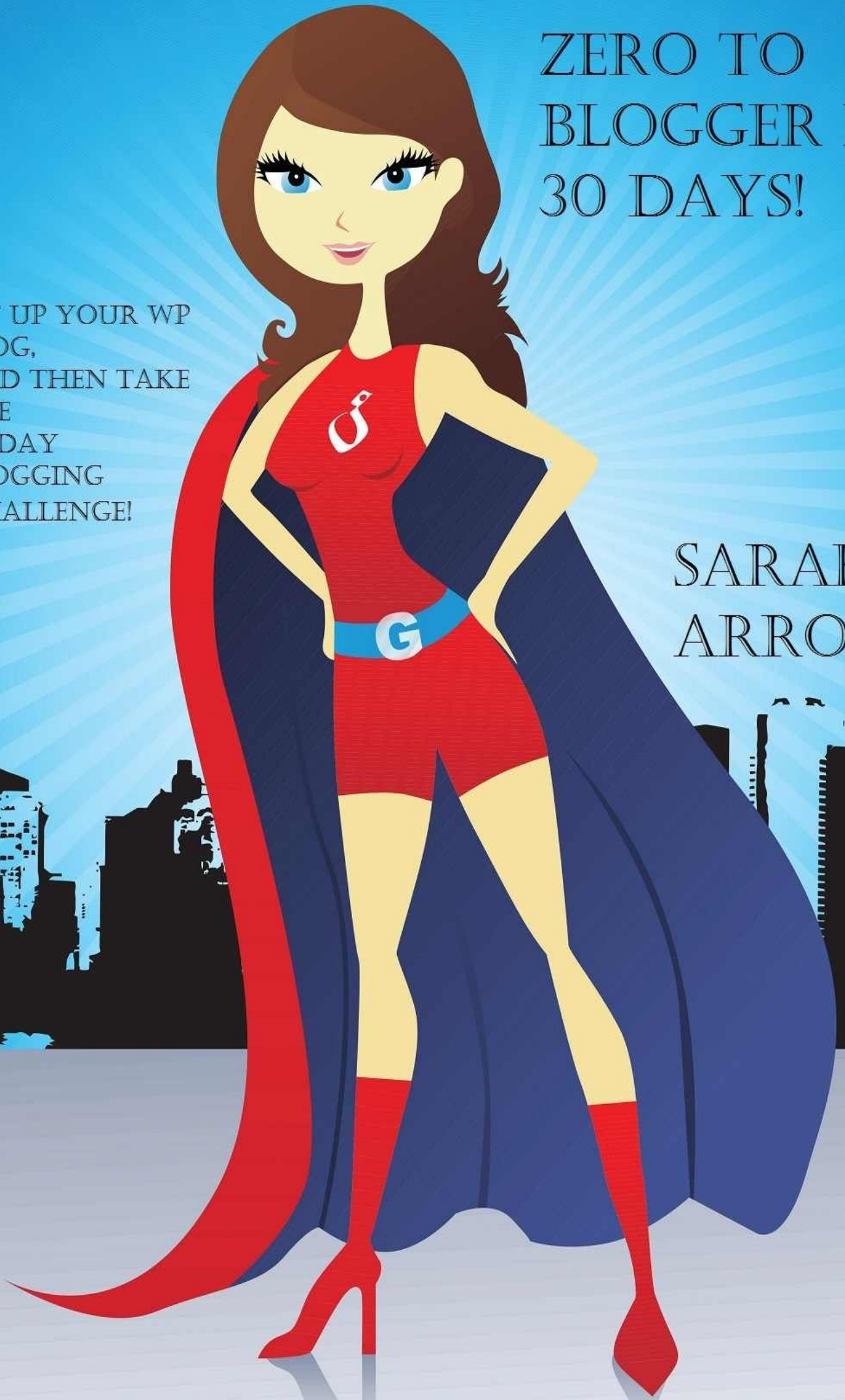


ZERO TO BLOGGER IN 30 DAYS!

SET UP YOUR WP
BLOG,
AND THEN TAKE
THE
30 DAY
BLOGGING
CHALLENGE!

SARAH
ARROW



From Zero to Blogger in 30 days

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About Sarah Arrow

I've always loved the internet and when I got my first email account back in 1995, I recall sitting with my 2 month old daughter on my lap, marvelling how I could send a letter to anyone else with a PC and an email address.

Later that year, I recall (fondly) of arguing with one of my bosses that we needed to have electronic CVs to send to clients, and how by doing so we'd have the edge over other recruitment companies. She gave my ideas a chance, and the processes I put in place *way back when* are still being used to this day. I wish fervently that I'd known about blogging then, as it would have transformed so many lives, but I didn't really get a grip on it until 2007.

I've never forgotten that fateful day in 2007 when my husband walked into the lounge with a serious look on his face. I was playing with my daughters (aged 12, 2 and 1) and he said "We need more business or we'll be bust in 6 weeks. You love that computer so much, go and do something with it to win business".

So I did. I love a challenge.

My first blog post wasn't self-hosted, and it consisted of 50 words. It took me 3 hours to write 50 words.

Yes. Really.

And I had to do it three times a week according to the instructions. So I did.

Fast forward to now.

My blogging challenges are tough, they stretch you and they help you grow as a blogger.

It will make you sweat to get 30 posts published in 30 consecutive days. It's a marathon not a sprint, but at the end of it you'll feel a real positive sense of achievement.

Did I save the business? Why yes I did, and over the years we've won multi-million pound contracts, fired blue-chip clients and blogged our way through the credit crunch and one of the toughest business trading periods in history.

Forbes has listed one of my blogs as a top website for women, 3 times, not bad for a Brit blogger. So have MSN, and I'm known as one of the UK's leading online marketers and bloggers. I've got a great audience and that's led to lunch with Guy Kawasaki, drinks with Tony Robbins (he paid) and a party with Martha Stewart (I sent someone else). I've discovered when you have an audience, you can speak to pretty much anyone you like and interview them on your blog, and if you do it like I do, they'll come to you.

This book isn't about getting famous, it's about getting found by your ideal customers online so you can make money. The side benefit of that of course may be fame.

Will blogging increase your business?

Try it and see.

How to use this guide

This book comes in two parts. The first part covers setting up your own self-hosted WordPress blog, and the second part covers blogging for 30 consecutive days.

It will read like a long, chatty conversation with me, about blogging.

If a housewife and mum in Essex can use a blog to save a business and launch a new publishing business, then you CAN do it too.

If you'd like to join the Facebook support group for encouragement and accountability you can find it here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/30DayBloggingChallenge>

A little about WordPress

Most people who are doing business today on the Internet talk a lot about WordPress, considering that WordPress is the base for over 70 million websites, it's not surprising that it's one of the most talked about topics.

WordPress is a fantastic open-source website building software that cannot be beat for functionality and usability, and has a thriving community of developers and experts supporting the software.

Most people who try to use it to build a basic website are easily able to do so alone, or with just a little minor help. If you can write and send an email, you can use WordPress. The fact is you're reading this guide on your Kindle and that indicates to me that you have enough ability to set up a WordPress website with ease.

WordPress can be used to build a simple blog, or a full featured ecommerce website or an online community. It is essentially a content management system (CMS). This is the best term to use to describe what WordPress software can do. It helps you manage all the content that you want to distribute to the world about your business. Whether that content is a blog post, articles, products and services, or a beautiful portfolio, WordPress can deliver everything you need in a website.

WordPress.com vs. WordPress.org

Many people get confused by the term “WordPress” because they immediately think about the WordPress.com website. WordPress.com is a multi-user blogging platform that uses WordPress software to operate, but it has limitations.

First, it’s hosted on WordPress.com’s servers. Secondly, you are very limited regarding the functionality of the website that you create unless you upgrade for a fee.

Plus, you do not really own your own content when you host it on WordPress.com’s servers, while you can back it up, if you don’t and they decide to delete you, you’ve lost everything. In addition, you have to follow all their rules as to what content you can display and it’s quite expensive hosting once upgraded.

But more importantly that all of that, WordPress.com has to earn revenue for supporting all of these free sites. So it will allow advertising in your content. And sometimes the competition will advertise in your content and cream off the leads from your expertise.

The information in this guide pertains to WordPress.org, or the self-hosted version as it’s known.

Things you will need to build a WordPress website:

Although WordPress is open source software and therefore free, you will still need a domain name and website hosting.

- [Domain name](#)
- [Website hosting](#)

You can get a free site that will have the suffix .WordPress.com at the end of your domain name. This is free but has its limitations. If you choose to go with this option you may not be able to complete all the suggestions in this book. You will be restricted to what plugins you can use and the results that you can achieve.

More importantly, you can be ejected from the site at any point you breach the T&Cs and you will not be able to monetize your blog effectively.

In this guide we look at domain names through [Go Daddy](#), although there are plenty of other domain name services out there. You can also get Domain name and hosting through [Hostgator](#). We've been able to get discounted hosting for you of 25% if you use the Zero to Social Media coupon code at the checkout.

In short, with Zero to WordPress Blogger you can create a pretty good, search engine friendly blog (or website) in a matter of hours or over a few days depending on your skills and abilities, even if you have zero skills!

The aim of this book is to enable the complete beginner to get a foot on the business blogging ladder and then to show them how to climb right to the top.

If your WordPress website is already set up then please skip to the content creation section. Zero to Blogger can be read back to back, or used as a reference guide as each chapter is a standalone.

Choosing and Setting Up a Domain Name

The domain name you choose will influence the rest of your business for as long as you're in business. It completely colors how someone sees your website. Could you imagine if Match.com was called "bestdatingsite.com"? They may never have reached the level of success they're at today!

Your domain name is your brand online. It's what customers will remember you by. It's what goes on your business cards and your marketing materials. It's what you tell people you meet at an event. It shapes and defines your blog's whole identity.

That's why it's so important to come up with a fantastic domain name. Here's a step by step guide to coming up with a good name, then registering that name and setting it up with your hosting account.

Step 1: Brainstorm Potential Domain Names

This process should take several days and should involve multiple people. Try to come up with as many good possible names as you can think of. Talk to others in the industry, talk to your peers, talk to your family members, and talk to your friends.

Whenever you have an idea, jot it down. Here are a few guidelines to follow:

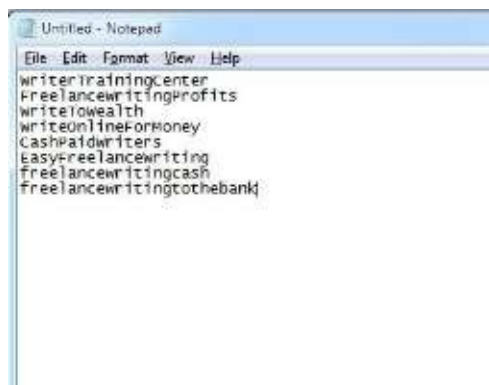
- 1) Only register domain names that you can get .coms for unless your business is a strictly local business in which case a co.uk, .eu or .us is acceptable.
- 2) The fewer words the better.
- 3) Don't use hyphens or underlines.
- 4) Don't use numbers. You don't want to have to say "that's 36, in numbers" every time you say your website to someone.
- 5) Don't use a word that's awkward to spell... unless you are prepared to buy every possible variation on that name.
- 6) Pick a name you can grow into. A name that'll work just as well 5 years from now as today. Don't pick "TommysTeddies.com" if you might expand into other lines of toys, for example. "TommysToys.com" might work better.
- 7) Don't use your own name as the domain name. If you are setting up your WordPress website with business in mind, at some point you will exit the business. When the domain is your name it becomes harder to sell and a business liability rather than an asset.
- 8) Avoid trademarks – names of other businesses like Twitter and Facebook are trademarked, so you may have to take your site down and cancel your domain if you use a trademark.
- 9) If your name is taken then try adding blog to it ie sarkemediablog.com

10) Come up with a lot of possible names, and then pick the best one.

You're probably going to have to come up with two or three word domain names. Some people recommend having a keyword in your domain name, but there is no advantage for having your domain as your exact keyword.

Single word domains are almost always going to be taken. You may occasionally be able to pick up a single word domain name from Sedo's [Great Domains](#) auction or from various domain name forums, but you won't be able to register it from scratch unless you've made the word up.

Jot all your possible domain names down in a text file.



Step 2: Check for Availability

There are two ways to check for domain availability on [GoDaddy](#). If you're just checking one domain off the cuff, you can just type it into the box on the main page.



But if you're typing in a large batch of potential domain names, you'll want to use the bulk domain search. Just click the "Bulk Domain Search" button in the lower right corner.

Paste all your potential domain names into the box, then check which extensions you want to check for. This mass checking tool will allow you to check all your ideas in one fell swoop.



Step 3: Choose the One You Want

GoDaddy will tell you which of the domains you entered is available. Choose the one you want to use, then click “Proceed to Check out.”



The screenshot shows a table with two columns: 'Available (4)' and 'Unavailable (4)'. Under 'Available', four domains are listed with checkboxes: 'writetrainingcenter.com', 'cashpaidenters.com', 'easyfreelancewriting.com' (checked), and 'freelancewritingtothebank.com'. Under 'Unavailable', four domains are listed: 'freelancewritingprofits.com', 'writetowearh.com', 'writeonlineformoney.com', and 'freelancewritingcash.com'. At the bottom, there is a 'Proceed to Checkout' button and a 'Log in to use your buyer profile.' link.

Step 4: Choose Registration Length

Choose how long you want your domain name for. By default, [GoDaddy](#) registers you for two years. If you don't want to pay for two years upfront, you can change it to one year. Alternatively, you can register for 5 years if you want a discount.



The screenshot shows the checkout page for 'EASYFREELANCEWRITING.COM'. It displays a table with columns for 'Product', 'Quantity', 'Rate/Discount', 'Price', and 'Total'. Below the table, there are options for registration length: '1 Year', '2 Years', '3 Years', and '5 Years'. A red arrow points to the '2 Years' option. Another red arrow points to the 'Continue to Checkout' button. The 'Order Summary' on the right shows a subtotal of \$63.47 and a total amount of \$115.00.

Step 5: Complete Checkout

Enter your payment details to complete the checkout process.



The screenshot shows the payment information form. It is divided into three sections: '1. Select Your Payment Method' (with 'CREDIT / DEBIT' selected), '2. Enter Your Billing Information' (with fields for First Name, Last Name, Address 1, Address 2, City, State/Territory, Zip Code, and Country), and '3. Enter Your Credit Card Information' (with fields for Card Number, Name On Card, Card Type, Expiration Date, and Card Verification #). There are also checkboxes for 'Use this for EXPRESSCHECKOUT' and 'Make this the Alternate Payment Method for my account'.

Once your payment goes through, you'll have your receipt. Congratulations! You're now a proud owner of your brand new domain name.

Step 6: Access Your Domain

Once you own your domain, you need to point your domain's nameservers towards your hosting account. This links your domain to your hosting so people who type in your domain name will be able to access your website.

To get started, you need to go to your domain's control panel. Start by clicking “My Account” in the upper left corner.



Then click on “Domains.”



Choose the domain name you want to edit and click “Launch.”



Step 7: Set Your Nameservers

Your nameservers are like a digital street address. It tells GoDaddy where to send your traffic when people type in your domain name. To set your nameservers, click on “Nameservers” at the top of the GoDaddy domain menu.



Get your nameserver information from your hosting company. This is usually in your registration email, but could be located somewhere in your cPanel.

Your HostGator Account Information

 sales@hostgator.com
to me

Thank you for your order and welcome to the HostGator Family!

Your Domain: [\[redacted\]](#)
Your Username: [\[redacted\]](#)
Your Password: [\[redacted\]](#)
Your sites IP address:
174.190.190

Your name servers:
[ns1469.hostgator.com](#)
[ns1470.hostgator.com](#)

Until your DNS has been changed and resolved over to our nameservers, you can access your cPanel at:
[\[redacted\]/cpanel](#)



Enter your nameservers into your domain setup screen.

If you are hosting your Web site with us (you have a hosting account with us associated with this domain) or you want to Park or Forward your domain, we will automatically set your nameservers for you.

I want to park my domains.
 I want to forward my domains.
 I have a hosting account with these domains.
 I have specific nameservers for my domains.

Nameserver 1: Nameserver 2: Nameserver 3: Nameserver 4:

[Add more](#) | [Manage DNS Records](#)

Did You Know?

Domains using our nameservers benefit from our worldwide DNS presence through Anycast DNS.

[Learn More](#)

Some notes on website hosting.

When you choose your hosting package it will probably be shared hosting, this means you rent your hosting space with a lot of other people.

As your WordPress website becomes popular you will find you need to increase your bandwidth with your hosting company that you will need to increase the amount of disk space that you lease from them and so on. If you don't upgrade your hosting package as your traffic increases you will find that you are throttled by your host, that your site is slow and unresponsive and that you cannot do all the things you want to do with your website.

Remember as you become more successful with your website and blogging activity then your costs will increase. The good news is that if you need to upgrade you should have the revenue to cover the costs.

That's all there is to it! You now know how to brainstorm for domain names, how to choose a good domain name, how to check your domain names en mass, how to register your domain and how to set your nameservers. Your new domain name is ready to go and you are ready to install WordPress!

How to Install WordPress

Installing WordPress isn't really all that difficult.

There are a couple of different ways in which it can be accomplished. You can hire someone to do it for you, but there honestly isn't any reason unless you just want to scrub that task off your to-do list fast.

I really don't recommend that as a newcomer you do a manual install. This involves building a MySQL database on your hosting account. Then using FTP to upload and install WordPress. There is a lot of room for error and frustration.

Since this is for beginners, let's focus on automatic installation. Your hosting account provider probably has a way for you to automatically install WordPress. The most popular option is to use Fantastico (and some hosting accounts use something called Softaculous which is similar to Fantastico) which this tutorial will guide you through.

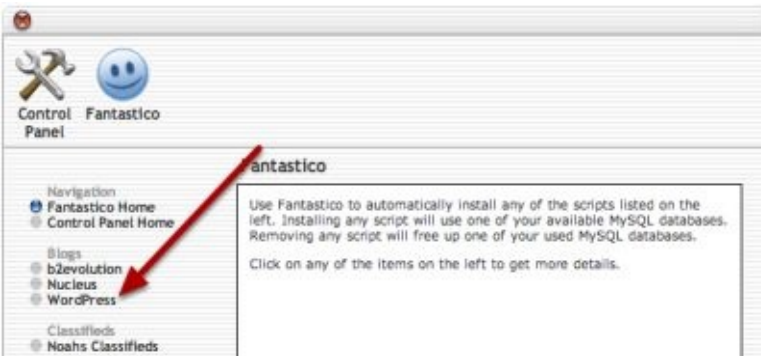
It's really just a matter of following the instructions. Seriously! Here are the steps...



Log in to your cPanel. Your log in and password should have been provided by your website hosting provider.



Scroll down until you see the Fantastico icon. It is in the Software/Services area of your hosting cPanel. Click on the icon.



On the left of that page look for the word **WordPress** and click it.



Now click **New Installation**.

WordPress

Install WordPress (1/3)

Installation location 1

Install on domain testblog.com ▾

Install in directory

Leave empty to install in the root directory of the domain (access example: http://domain/).
Enter only the directory name to install in a directory (for **http://domain/name/** enter **name** only). This directory **SHOULD NOT** exist, it will be automatically created!

Admin access data 2

Administrator-username (you need this to enter the protected admin area)

Password (you need this to enter the protected admin area)

Base configuration 3

Admin nickname

Admin e-mail (your email address)

Site name testblog.com

Description

Install WordPress

Now it's time to configure your installation. We will walk you through the main steps.

SECTION 1: Installation Location

Section 1 is where you choose where to install your WordPress blog. If you need to install it on a subdomain or add-on domain, click the dropdown box and select the correct domain. If you want to install it in a directory, e.g. `yoursite.com/blog`, rather than just `yoursite.com`, enter that in the directory box.

Otherwise, you don't need to select anything here.

SECTION 2: Admin Access Data

This is where you need to enter your admin username and password. Do not choose anything obvious here. This means choosing an admin username that's

hard to guess (not your own name or the word ‘admin’).

For your password, don’t use a password you’ve used on any other sites, and include a combination of letters, numbers, special characters and capital letters. This is to help protect your WordPress site against hackers.

SECTION 3: Base Configuration

Now you can enter your name as you want it to show on your website to the public. In this section you can just use something obvious like your name or the word “admin”.

You’ll also want to enter an email address (this is where you’ll receive notifications about your blog e.g. new comments) and your site name and description.

You can change this information at a later date, so don’t worry about it too much for now.

Once you’re done, click Install WordPress.

Install WordPress (2/3)

The MySQL database and MySQL user [REDACTED] will be created and used for this installation.

- You chose to install in the main directory of the domain **testblog.com**.
- The access URL will be: **http://testblog.com/**.

Click on **Finish installation** to continue.

Finish installation

Next you’ll be asked if you want to create the database. Click **Finish Installation**.

WordPress

Install WordPress (3/3)

/wp-config.php configured
/data.sql configured

Please notice:

We only offer auto-installation and auto-configuration of **WordPress** but do not offer any kind of support.

You need a username and a password to enter the admin area. Your username is **ahardtouguesname**. Your password is **ahardtouguespassword**. The full URL to the admin area **(Bookmark this!)** <http://testblog.com/wp-admin/>

DO NOT REMOVE the file named **fantastico_fileslist.txt** from the installation directory. It is used for **uninstalling this application**.

[Back to WordPress overview](#)

Email the details of this installation to:

[Send E-mail](#)

Now you'll see the results of your installation. Note that you are now given the login link to your WordPress dashboard - this is circled in red in the example above. Make sure you note down this login URL, as well as your username and password. You'll need it to make changes to your site!

You can also enter your email address in the box to have the details emailed to you. To protect your details, you'll want to make sure your email account is also secured with a strong password if you choose to use this option!

Now you're done! Easy, right?!

Introducing the WordPress Admin Panel (the Dashboard)

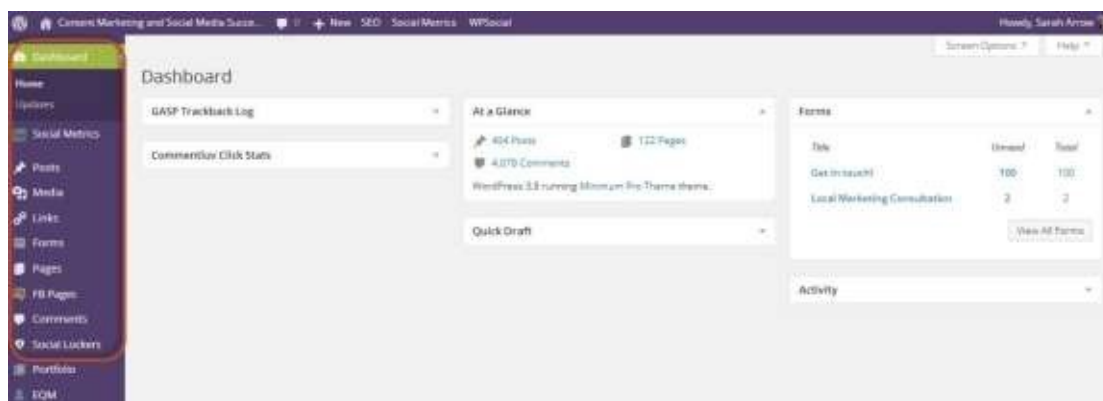
WordPress is so easy to use, it's really just a matter of familiarizing yourself with the admin panel otherwise known as the "Dashboard".

When you finish installing WordPress you'll get an address to sign into WordPress that usually looks something like this:

<http://www.yourdomainname.com/wp-admin>

This is where you go to change all the options behind the scenes, including your design, blog settings and your pages and posts. Here's an illustrated guide to help you get familiar with everything that's there.

Don't worry - it might look colorful (and overwhelming) at first, but WordPress is easy to get to grips with.



This is a view of what you'll see when you login to WordPress for the first time - it could look a little different, but you'll still have the same features.

On the right you'll see the white boxes, these can be dragged and dropped so that they are positioned how you like them. The little triangle in the top right of the box means you can toggle open or close the boxes.

See that menu on the left (highlighted in a red square)? That's the menu you'll

use to reach all of the WordPress admin functions.

Let's go through each section one by one. Note that this list will vary depending on your theme and on which plugins you've installed. We'll go through the default options.

Posts



First you'll see the Posts menu:

- **All Posts:** This will take you to the screen that shows all of your blog posts.
- **Add New:** This takes you to the new post screen.
- **Categories:** This lets you add, delete and edit your blog post categories. Posting different posts in different categories helps organize your blog and make it easier to navigate.
- **Tags:** This lets you manage your post tags. Tags are labels for each post, like keywords, that help you to organize your site better.

It's okay to try out each link to see what it does. Don't be scared, you won't break it!

Media



The Media menu lets you manage uploaded files - things like images, videos, PDFs, MP3s etc.

- **Library:** This lets you view all the media you've uploaded in the past. You can rename and delete files if you need to.

- **Add New:** This brings you to the screen where you can upload new files. Note that, if you want to add files to a post, you can also upload them directly from the post screen

Links



Next you'll see the Links menu. This is all tied to the Links widget, so if you're not using that widget to showcase links you choose, then don't worry about these options:

- **All Links:** This will let you view and edit all the links you've previously uploaded.
- **Add New:** This lets you add a new link.
- **Link Categories:** As with posts, you can also categorize your links for better organization.

Pages



The Pages menu is very similar to the Posts menu:

- **All Pages:** This is where you can view all the pages you already have on your blog.
- **Add New:** This will take you to an on-screen editor to add a new page.

Remember that a page is different from a post. A post is a blog post, and an easy way to give updates to your audience. Whereas a page is an actual new page of your website that should be considered more “static” like the old days of Web Pages. However, with WordPress, it's really just as easy to add and subtract a page as it is to make a blog post.

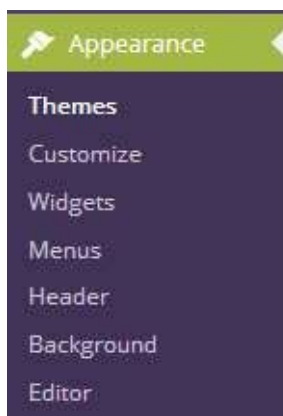
Comments



Most WordPress blog users want users to be able to leave comments. These comments will show at the end of each post. Rarely, some people decide to turn off comments. If that's you, then you won't need this menu. Otherwise, you'll be able to use it for a number of functions.

Clicking the **Comments** menu will take you to a page where you can moderate comments (check for spam), edit comments, delete comments, and reply to comments.

Appearance



Next up we have the Appearance menu. This is where all the options are for changing the way your site looks. Let's go through them one by one:

- **Themes:** This section will allow you to search for themes to install, or upload your own themes. Themes are templates that completely change the look of your site.
- **Widgets:** Widgets allow you to add specific elements, like a list of recent posts, a search box, HTML code etc. to the sidebar of your blog.
- **Menus:** This section is used to choose which pages will be shown on your navigation menu.
- **Theme Options:** This may or may not show depending on which theme you have installed. If it's there, it'll allow you to change elements of your theme like the layout or colors.
- **Editor:** This is for more advanced users, for those who want to edit their theme's code to make more customizations.

Plugins



Plugins can add a lot of functionality to your WordPress site, without you having to know any code. You don't *need* to use plugins, but most people do. Here are the plugin menu options:

- **Installed Plugins:** This will let you view a list of all the plugins you've installed. You can also delete, activate and upgrade plugins from here.
- **Add New:** Use this to search for free WordPress plugins or upload plugin zip files.
- **Editor:** This is for advanced users to edit the coding of plugins for further customizations.

Users



In some situations, you'll have several users signed up to your blog. This could be customers, or it could be virtual assistants who help you post to the blog, or even a co-owner with the same admin privileges as you. Even if you don't have other users, you may still need to use this menu to change your own profile/ password:

- **All Users:** This is where you view all the users signed up to your blog. You can delete and edit them when necessary.
- **Add New:** You can manually add new users this way. Useful when you want to grant access to other people - you can let assistants, for example, edit your posts but not change your settings.
- **Your Profile:** This is where you can change your own settings, like your password, email address or avatar and in this section you can also choose the color of your WordPress dashboard! As you can see from the images mine is green and purple.

Tools



You probably won't need to use the tools menu until you install a plugin that adds an extra menu option here. However, it's worth noting the **Import** and **Export** links that will let you backup your content (blog posts and pages) and media to transfer it somewhere else, or import another blog's content into your new WordPress installation.

Settings



You'll want to go over the Settings menu when you first install a new blog. Don't worry if some things are over your head. These are the most important settings to check:

- **General:** This is where you can change your blog's name and tagline, your URL, time zone, and your main notification email address.
- **Writing:** You probably don't need to change these settings. But use it if you want to post via email (an advanced feature) or change the default post and link categories.
- **Reading:** Use the settings here to change how many posts show on your homepage, and whether you want your site to show up in search engine results.
- **Discussion:** Here, you can change various settings for people commenting on your blog, and the notifications you get. You can probably keep these as-is.
- **Media:** It's unlikely you'll need to change these settings, which determine thumbnail sizes for images and the location of uploaded files.
- **Permalinks:** You definitely want to change your permalinks. By default, every new post you publish will have a URL like `yoursite.com/?p=336` - doesn't look great does it? Instead, select the Post Name option for a URL more like `yoursite.com/your-post-title` - much better! Not only that you can remember your URLs to specific pages!

Updates



One more tip about the Dashboard. If WordPress, or your theme has released an update this is where you'll see the announcement. It is recommended to keep WordPress itself updated at all times.

Remember that if you update your actual Theme, if you've customized it in anyway, those changes may be lost. Always read directions when it comes to your WordPress website and themes that you use. If you use what is known as a child theme, you will not lose customization with an upgrade. More on that in the chapter on Frameworks.

The very best way to familiarize yourself with your admin panel or "Dashboard" is to just get in there, click around and familiarize yourself with which buttons does what. Don't be scared. You can always uninstall it all and start over if something goes wrong.

How to Create WordPress Posts & Pages

Now that you've installed WordPress to your domain name, it's time to start creating some content!

You'll do this in the form of "posts" and "pages". This tutorial will guide you through the differences between the two, and teach you how to get started with your business blog.

Posts Vs. Pages - What's the Difference?

POSTS

You can think of posts as a diary type listing, except businesses and information sites all use them too. Posts are dynamic. Depending on how you set up your posts they're usually listed in reverse chronological order (just like a diary) with the most recent date being at the top of the list.

All posts appear on the home page, or the blog page, or even a "news" section, depending how you set up your blog posts to appear in your settings area of your dashboard. You also have an archive of posts in which anyone can see old posts and entries by looking.

Readers can read posts via a few methods, such as clicking on categories, recent posts, and archives and even via RSS feed. They all have a category and can be tagged too. The great thing about WordPress is that you are in complete control of whom, how and when anyone sees your blog posts via your settings area of your Dashboard.

PAGES

Think of pages as static website pages just like "old style" websites used to have. Pages don't use categories or tags to differentiate themselves.

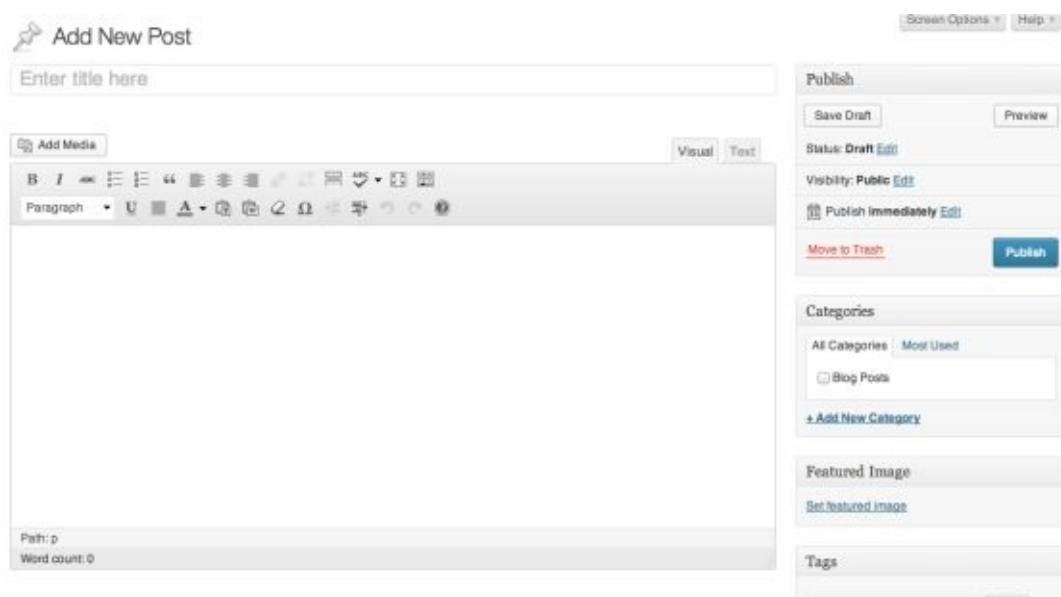
Like blog posts, there is no limit to the number of pages you can make on your WordPress website or blog. You can hide pages from view, and link to them on other pages, or make them private completely. You can make pages main menu items, and submenu items using various plugins and features depending upon the theme you choose.

Unlike a blog post, when you create the new page, you will create it and usually not change it very much. A good way to think of this is that every menu item is a page including your Contact page, your About page and so on.

How to Create a New Blog Post



There are two ways to create a new page. Either click the **+ New** button in the top toolbar, or click **Add New** under the Posts menu.



Now you'll see an editor that looks like this. As you can see from the image above, you can enter a title into the space indicated. This is the title as it'll show up in public on your website, so make it catchy! We'll talk more about headlines later on.

You can then use the editor in the box below to enter your post content. Let's look at the formatting options a little more closely...



As you can see, the formatting options are very similar to what you'd use if you were typing a document on a word processor like Microsoft Word.

You can make your text bold, center-aligned, or change its color. You can also create sub-headings within the post to make it easier for your visitors to read. This is all very easy to get used to and the best way to learn is by playing around with it yourself.

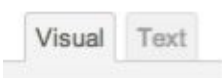
There are just a few options that aren't the same as a word processor that are worth going over.



Add Media: This button is what you click if you want to add pictures, videos, audio files or any other media files. You can either upload them straight from your computer hard drive, or you can select a file that you previously uploaded to the Media Library.



The More Tag: You may have noticed that many websites include an excerpt of the content on their homepage, with a link that says "read more". If you want to do this on your own site, click this button to insert the "more" tag at the point at which you want your excerpt to end.



You may have also noticed the **Visual/ Text** toggle button on the right hand side. You don't need to worry about this unless you need to insert some HTML code into your post. If so, make sure you do so using the Text editor. We'll talk more about this later on.

[Categories, Tags & Featured Image](#)

Categories

All Categories Most Used

Blog Posts

[+ Add New Category](#)

Featured Image

[Set featured image](#)

Tags

Add

Separate tags with commas

[Choose from the most used tags](#)

Once you've written your post, you'll probably want to change some of the settings on that same post screen. Before you do, though, always save your post as a draft to make sure you don't lose anything!

Categories: In the categories box, you can choose an appropriate category to assign to this post. If you haven't created one yet, click "Add New Category"

It is well worth using categories, as this helps visitors better navigate your site better and find content related to what they've just read. You can also add categories to your navigation if you have topics that you want to highlight.

When you first set up your site you will need to edit "uncategorized" from your categories. You do this by editing the category and changing the name. I use the generic word "blog" to replace uncategorized. It's worth remembering that this will be the default setting if you forget to add your post to a category.

Featured Image: If your theme supports it, you can use this option to choose an image from your Media Library, or upload one from your computer. The image will then show however your theme is set to display it.

For all other images, you can just add them directly within the post editor.

Tags: These are another way to label your posts. It's a good idea to add keywords related to your posts here, but it's totally optional.

Publishing Your Post & Changing Privacy Settings

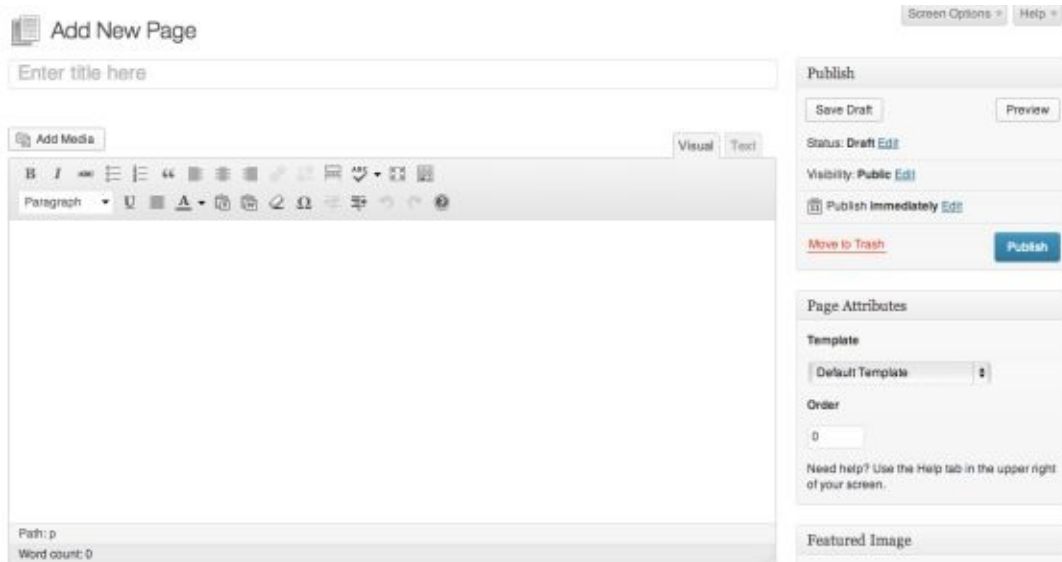


Here's an explanation of the other settings there:

- **Status:** Here you can save posts as Drafts or as Pending Review. Both are not visible to the public and are useful for your own organization.
- **Visibility:** Public posts will be visible to everyone (once you press Publish). Private posts will be visible only to logged in WordPress admin users. Password Protected means only those who you provide with the password will be able to view the content.
- **Publish Immediately:** Don't want to publish your post right now? Click the edit button here and you can schedule the post for a date in the future.

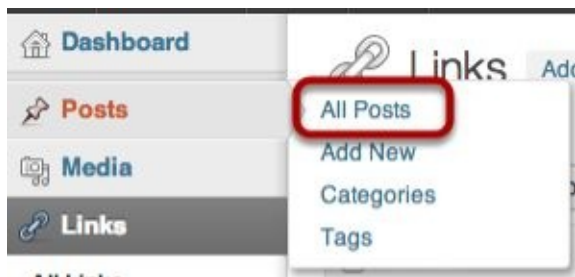
NOTE: Even if your post is set to Public, and is scheduled immediately or in the future, you must press **Publish** before it will show up on your blog or set up the future scheduling option.

Creating a New Page



Note that the Page creation process is almost exactly the same as the Post creation process. The only difference is that you won't be able to add categories and tags to your posts. You can still add media to the page, change the privacy settings, schedule it in advance and so on.

Viewing Posts and Pages You've Already Created



Any time you want to view the posts or pages you've already created, select **All Posts** or **All Pages**. This is where you go if you want to delete posts, too.

Be sure to delete the default post added when you first install WordPress! And make sure you remember to edit the About page straight away and delete the sample page.

Remember, although there are a lot of powerful options included when you create pages and posts, it's actually very easy once you get used to it. So go in there and play around with some options. And have fun creating all the new content for your website!

How to Install a WordPress Theme

The theme is the look and feel of your website or blog. It can not only command the design, but also with some themes the functionality of your site. But mostly, it's the design. It's how it looks. It's like frosting on a cake.

Some themes are very basic, but others are outrageously complicated. There are free and premium (paid) themes to choose from.

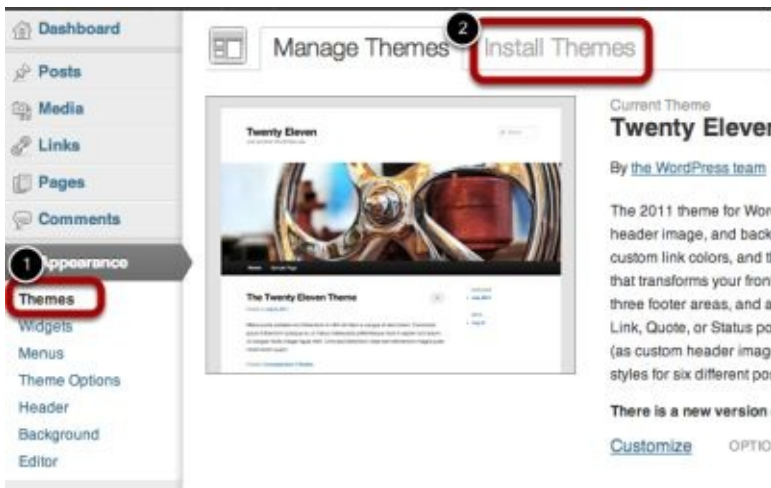
What kind of theme you choose depends on what you're using it for. If you're just making a personal blog, there are plenty of free themes to choose from. Heck, even if it's a business website, there are still free themes to choose from that will work great. Most themes are easily modifiable in terms of colors, headers, and layout.

One thing you must make sure your theme is and that's mobile responsive. In the US more people have a mobile device than a desktop or laptop. I think that statistic will replicate world-wide as time goes on, so mobile responsiveness is a must.

A great thing about WordPress is that you can try out different themes, and most of the time you'll be able to keep the information already on your site as it is.

Some people like to have a different header every season, for example. If you choose a theme where it's simple to modify the header it means that will only take you as long as it takes to create a new header and upload it in the Dashboard (a matter of minutes). If you choose a theme where it's more complicated to upload a header, you may come to dread changing the header and stop doing it.

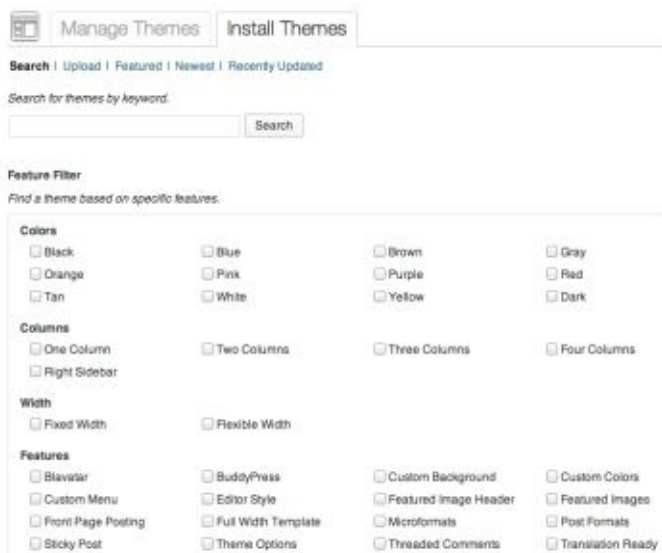
[How to Search for and Install Themes within the WordPress Dashboard](#)



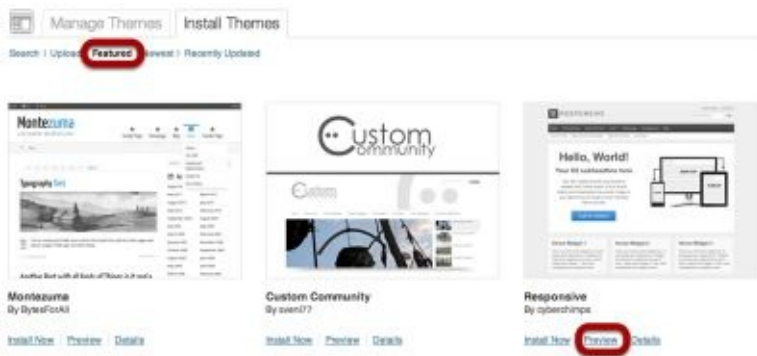
Some really useful free themes can be found by searching via your Dashboard. Simply click on Appearance, **Themes [1]**, and then **Install Themes [2]**.

There's a tiny downside to installing themes that are free, and that's you might have a link in the footer that you are not allowed to remove to a gambling site or another location that conflicts with your business.

Support may not be free with a free theme, and sometimes the theme will not be updated when WordPress is, leaving your site at risk.



On the theme installation page you can search for a theme via keywords, or choose certain design options to find the right theme for you.



Overwhelmed with all the options? Then we recommend you just click **Featured** at the top of the Install Themes page. On that featured page, you'll see some of the best examples of WordPress themes.

Like the look of a theme on that page, but want to preview how it'll look on your website? Simply click the **Preview** button under a theme you like the look of.



For this tutorial, we're going to install the Responsive theme. Here's what it looks like on the preview.



Note - you can either exit the preview to see other themes by pressing **Close** [1], or you can press the **Install button** [2] to install the chosen theme.

Installing Theme: Responsive 1.9.3

Downloading install package from <http://wordpress.org/extend/t>

Unpacking the package...

Installing the theme...

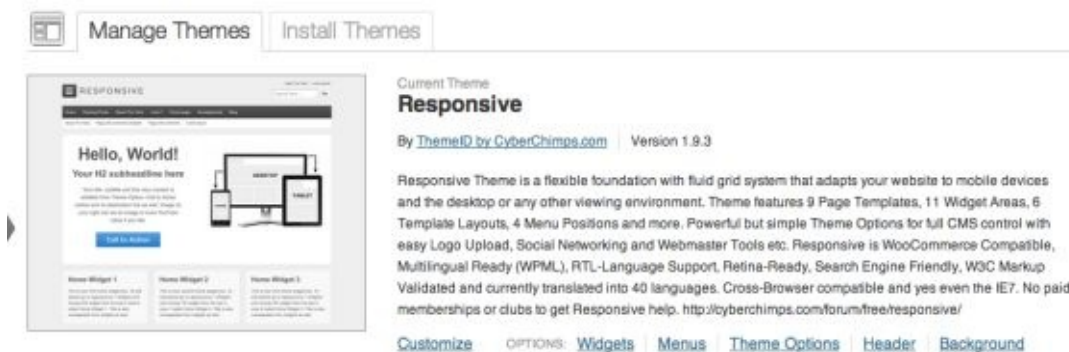
Successfully installed the theme **Responsive 1.9.3**.

[Live Preview](#) | [Activate](#) | [Return to Theme Installer](#)

Once you click to install a theme you get another option to view a **Live Preview**. This is another preview of the theme, but this time you'll see how it looks with the content and widgets you already have on your site.

Once you're happy, click **Activate**.

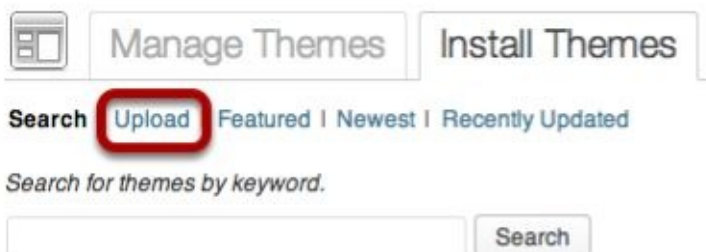
Your theme is now live! Time to visit your blog and see how it looks.



The screenshot shows the WordPress theme installer interface. At the top, there are two buttons: "Manage Themes" and "Install Themes". Below this, there is a preview of the "Responsive" theme, which displays a "Hello, World!" message and a fluid grid system. To the right of the preview, the text reads: "Current Theme: **Responsive**. By ThemeID by CyberChimps.com | Version 1.9.3". Below this, there is a detailed description of the theme's features, including its fluid grid system, 9 page templates, 11 widget areas, and compatibility with various devices and languages. At the bottom of the preview area, there are links for "Customize" and "OPTIONS: Widgets, Menu, Theme Options, Header, Background".

NOTE: You can go back to your **Manage Themes** page at any time to view your theme and any updates that might be available. Many themes come with their own option panels, and there is usually a link in this section to get support if you need it.

How to Upload Your Own Theme Zip File



The screenshot shows the WordPress theme search interface. At the top, there are two buttons: "Manage Themes" and "Install Themes". Below this, there is a search bar with the text "Search" and a red box around the "Upload" button. To the right of the search bar, there are links for "Featured", "Newest", and "Recently Updated". Below the search bar, there is a text input field and a "Search" button.

Many themes are available to download from external websites, and won't be found when using the Dashboard search method above. Thankfully, installing a theme from a zip file is extremely easy!

Simply go to the **Install Themes** page as you did before, but this time select **Upload**.



Install a theme in .zip format

If you have a theme in a .zip format, you may install it by uploading it here.



Next, select **Choose File** to select the file location from your hard drive. Then click **Upload**.

Installing Theme from uplo

Unpacking the package...

Installing the theme...

Theme installed successfully.

[Live Preview](#) | [Activate](#) | [Return to Themes page](#)

Once the file has uploaded, you get the same options as before. You can either preview the theme on your site or click **Activate**.

That's it - simple!

WordPress Frameworks

After you've spent a little bit of time working with a WordPress website – particularly if you've ever shopped around for a new theme for your site – you're likely to come across the term “Theme Framework” or “WordPress Framework”.

A theme framework is a library of code that makes it relatively easy for a user to develop a unique look on their WordPress website or use a design straight out of the zip file. It often makes using certain plugins obsolete, and it can decrease page loading time. A framework can only be used on self-hosted WordPress websites, so if your site ends in `.WordPress.com` then you'll be unable to use them.

Do I need to use a WordPress Framework?

I think when you are starting out using WordPress it's not essential, but as you start to grow your blog and increase usability and functionality then you'll hanker after a framework. If you're an existing client of mine, you'll already know that you have a framework in place and are reaping the many benefits of using one.

So what does a framework do?

Theme frameworks generally make use of the “parent theme” and “child theme” capabilities of WordPress so that you can create multiple custom themes and variations without permanently altering the foundations of the theme (or messing with the code), so when you want to create a new look it’s much faster, and you don’t lose much (if any) of the functionality you have in place.

This list of frameworks is in no particular order and where I’ve used the framework I’ll share my experiences with it, for each one I’ve tried to include a downside where possible.

[Genesis.](#)

[Genesis](#) is one of the leading premium WordPress frameworks, and for good reason. The code is clean and optimized for SEO purposes, and the framework follows the best WordPress security practices. The Genesis framework automatically updates itself, so your website code will always be current and fully optimized. My site [Sarkemedia.com](#) is built using Genesis and the Minimum Pro Child Theme.

There are many tutorials and educational resources available on the [StudioPress](#) / Genesis website to get you up and running quickly. Of course the real bonus to this WordPress framework is that it comes with unlimited lifetime support – this can be extremely valuable for a website owner who isn't completely comfortable with the ins and outs of WordPress and needs extra support.

SEO and Google Authorship are built into Genesis, making it easier for you to benefit from better search rankings. Genesis can be taken further with the [Dynamik theme](#) and the [Genesis Extender plugin](#). Both of which I recommend highly.

Many of the child themes are HTML5 ready, mobile responsive and have rich snippets ready to be activated. SEO is built in, and you can pretty much use one of the child themes straight out of the zip file. When you purchase the [Studiopress](#) pro plus pack, you get all the themes they have available plus the ones they add in the future. There's also a community of developers that sell the child themes that they create for Genesis.

The support is excellent; I recently had a query that was answered in two hours! I'd spent 3 days trying to work it out myself and the support team answered it in just two hours!

The downside?

Some of the child themes take a background image and no sizing is given, this can make it very hard to get the right sized image as your background. You may have to experiment a bit to get the look that you want. Not much of a downside, but the creators have spent a lot of time and effort to make things as easy as possible for their users.

2. [Thesis 2.0](#).

[Thesis](#) is another leading premium WordPress Theme Framework. Thesis was my first love of all the WordPress Frameworks. The Thesis framework is built upon a three-pronged approach to site design: “Boxes” allow you to add discreet elements of functionality to a new website you are creating without having to write any code yourself.

“Skins” provides you with a drag and drop interface for creating exactly the type of look and feel you’re after. One of the skins on offer is the “Social Triggers” skin, so if you are a Derek Halpern fan, then you can hack up the Social Triggers skin to look awesome. I don’t recommend that you use any design based on someone else’s blog straight out of the box, always add your own branding and customizations so the skin is completely yours.

“Packages” let you make precise CSS customizations without having to know any CSS code or ever have to dig into a single style sheet. Thesis was the first framework to include [Rich Snippets](#). Rich Snippets will become more powerful as time goes by and is something that gives Thesis the advantage when it comes to search. In short, I’ve found Thesis to lead the way when it comes to functionality and the speed of which things are implemented into their framework.

SEO is built into Thesis, along with typography and Google fonts, so you can pretty much hand customise any area of your website...

The downside? Thesis can blow your head up with the functionality and time that it takes, using a skin will help speed things up a lot, but I’ve found when I use Thesis I spend hours in WordPress heaven just tinkering... Our transport website was on Thesis for a very long time, I recently moved it to Genesis so that my husband could tinker with it. When it comes to downsides, there’s not much of one.

3. [Thematic](#).

Thematic is a very popular free and open source WordPress theme development framework. Thematic contains a top notch starter theme, and can also be used to quickly build custom themes from scratch. The framework contains 13 widget ready areas in the basic framework, a grid layout and the possibility for even more in a child theme. The framework is fully compatible with leading SEO plug-ins such as All-In-One SEO and Platinum SEO. Thematic also offers options for multi-author blogging which is very handy. There are paid child themes available if you don't want to create something yourself.

Thematic is created by Automattic, the creators of WordPress, so you can expect this framework to be incredibly powerful and versatile with no loss of performance.

Downside? I've not had the opportunity to use this theme, so I cannot say. And yes, that's a valid downside!

4. [Reverie](#).

Reverie is another popular free design framework for WordPress. Reverie leverages the power of the increasingly popular HTML5 Boilerplate standard to help users create fast, dynamic and responsive WordPress themes.

The framework allows for tight and easy integration with bbPress 2.0, which can be extremely valuable if you anticipate wanting to include bulletin board functionality on your WordPress site. Reverie automatically uses a media query to adjust the display for smart phones and tablets, and the framework is particularly optimized for the iPhone and iPod. You may wish to consider this framework if you anticipate a significant number of your users visiting your site from these devices.

Downside? This framework has a very specific aim – mobile users. If you are not getting a lot of mobile traffic, then this may not be useful to you at all.

5. [WhiteBoard](#).

Speaking of frameworks optimized for mobile devices... WhiteBoard is another powerful free option. WhiteBoard is built using the leading CSS3 and Less Framework standards, which ensures that your WordPress site content will be as attractive and functional on smart phones and tablets as it is on a traditional computer monitor.

The underlying WhiteBoard code is well noted and commented, so if you or your development staff ever needs to take a deeper look inside the inner workings of the framework, it will be easier to get the information you need. Finally, WhiteBoard claims to utilize more dynamic Classes and IDs than any other WordPress framework, which has the potential to help you with your SEO efforts.

Downside? If you are not familiar with classes you might not appreciate what this framework can do.

6. [Howling Dog Theme Framework.](#)

The Howling Dog Theme Framework (and its “K9 Control Panel”) is a premium framework that provides a great deal of control over visual aspects of your custom theme. You can quickly adjust virtually any layout parameters in order to achieve exactly the look you have in mind, and your typography options are extremely broad with built in support for the Cufon library of free fonts. This framework also has a particular focus on making sure that whatever themes you come up with will display properly in just about any type of browser your visitor may be using.

About 2 years ago I put Howling Dog through its paces, and I didn’t find it lacking in anything! I found it very intuitive to use, and the support is extensive. Genesis Dynamik reminds me a lot of the Howling Dog Framework, and if you want the functionality of Dynamik but don’t have the budget then get Howling Dog, and start saving for one of their premium themes or the paid version of the framework to have even more functionality.

Downside?

Some of the functionality that you might like is in the paid version, that said Genesis and Thesis are both paid (premium) frameworks, so it’s not really a downside at all.

7. [The Upthemes Framework.](#)

Upthemes is a WordPress framework that takes a different approach to custom theming. Rather than starting out from scratch, you can use the Upthemes Framework in conjunction with a WordPress theme you already have. You can use Upthemes to customize the layout and color schemes of your theme, quickly change the header and background images and colors, and take a quick live preview of any changes to make sure they're exactly what you're looking for. If you are completely new to working with a framework, this makes a great starting point, although truth be told you'll never really want to leave.

I can't think of any downsides to Up themes other than there's a small cost, as it's a premium framework. But you shouldn't let cost put you off, it helps pay for amazing support and keeps your framework in good working order.

8. [PageLines](#).

[PageLines](#) is a popular “drag and drop” premium framework that makes it easy for users who want to stay as far away from the code as possible to create custom themes for their sites. Pricing is on a monthly basis and of course includes awesome support. The framework is mobile ready, uses Google Fonts and has good eCommerce capabilities. The overall effect from [Pagelines](#) is a sleek and responsive WordPress website.

Downsides?

The monthly subscription may be off-putting for some, but the design options will probably make up for that! I think there may be a free version with limited functionality, but never having used Pagelines I couldn't find it on their website. Having said that, this could be the framework for you if you want a simple, sleek design that looks professional without having to touch a line of code.

9. [Woo Themes](#).

[Woo Themes](#) are incredibly popular with the WordPress/eCommerce crowd. The Framework is free with certain themes and there of course is a range of premium themes that are easily customisable. Woo Themes operate a club system as well as the option to purchase individual themes. They also have a range of premium [WordPress plugins that will enable you to create online courses](#) etc.

I've done a little work with Woo themes and their Framework, but I think I've been spoiled by Genesis and Thesis and I prefer working with them. But there's a huge amount of people that totally adore Woo and all the things it can do (custom shortcodes and auto thumbnail resizer etc), so it's well worth checking out. They also have extensions for Amazon payments so that your customer never has to leave your own site... yes the extensions are well worth checking out too.

Downsides?

Cost could be a big factor with Woo, new licensing means support is payable after your license expires, but don't let that stop you from trying out their framework and a huge range of themes. The Canvas theme is popular with a lot of bloggers and small business owners.

10. [Headway Themes](#).

Headway was one of the original drag and drop frameworks like Pagelines. HTML 5 ready, you can drag and drop things till your heart's content. I had a thing with Headway a few years back, but sadly we never lasted. Like Thesis, everything is customisable from the dashboard, and if you have a bit of time you can create something really spectacular. Like Thesis, StudioPress and Woo, the code is search engine friendly, although I have to be honest and say that if any of the frameworks I've mentioned weren't search friendly with good, solid code, then they wouldn't have been mentioned. Again, support is good and the visual editor is highly recommended!

Downsides?

Getting used to the grid layout after using Thesis / Studiopress was awkward and time consuming; however a lot of people pick it up quickly and have found it quite intuitive.

WordPress frameworks can make your website or blog look pretty awesome in a short amount of time, they can improve how you're found in search and they can enable your WordPress website to do pretty much anything. All you need is the time to create!

As the frameworks tend to use child themes you won't lose any customisations to your design when you have to upgrade.

How to Use WordPress Plugins

One of the best things about WordPress is the ability to use plugins! Plugins are very special additions or add-ons to WordPress that lets it go from an old-fashioned static site to fabulous and impressive in a very short space of time. A plugin can take you from inactive to interactive, from nothing special to spectacular!

It is essentially software or an app that you add on to your instance of WordPress to make it do something you want it to do, or behave in a certain way.

One plugin may add a contact form, another clickable social media icons, another a discussion forum, or even a shopping cart. Honestly, there isn't enough room to explain all that plugins do for WordPress. It's what makes WordPress so special. Instead of buying or using bulky software, you can customize your WordPress instance to do what you want and need it to do.

So What Plugins Should You Install?

You don't actually *need* to install any plugins to get going. However, once you get more familiar with WordPress, adding new plugins will definitely help create a better site.

Most people do use some form of the following plugins on their site:

- **SEO:** A plugin that allows the owner of the site to make their WordPress more SEO friendly.
- **Contact Forms:** A plugin that allows you to insert a contact form on any page you desire.
- **Backup:** A plugin that helps you automatically back up your website or blog so that if something ever goes wrong you'll have it.
- **Social Media:** Most people have "like" buttons, "tweet" buttons and more on their blogs and websites today, and plugins make it easy to add them without knowing any code whatsoever.
- **Security:** Always add some sort of security to your blog or website to ensure safety from hackers. You may think no one cares about your little blog but these hackers are often not even people today, they are computer programs designed to find security holes and it can happen to the most obscure blog or website.

How to Install a Free WordPress Plugin Through WordPress



Most free plugins you hear people talking about will be available to download right from within your WordPress dashboard they are stored in what's known

as the WordPress repository. To search for one, click **Add New** on the WordPress plugins menu.

Install Plugins

[Search](#) | [Upload](#) | [Featured](#) | [Popular](#) | [Newest](#) | [Favorites](#)

Plugins extend and expand the functionality of WordPress. You

Search

Now you can enter your search term into the box before pressing **Search Plugins**. For this tutorial, we will be searching for and activating a contact form plugin.

You can search for anything you need, whether that's the exact name of a plugin someone told you about, or a type of plugin you need e.g. a Facebook posting plugin, an SEO plugin etc.

Install Plugins

[Search](#) | [Search Results](#) | [Upload](#) | [Featured](#) | [Popular](#) | [Newest](#) | [Favorites](#)

Keyword: 60 items 1 of 2

Name	Version	Rating	Description
Contact Form Details: Install Now	3.43	★★★★☆	Contact Form allows you to add a feedback form to a post or a page in an easy manner. FAQ Support Features Actions: You can choose where to send the messages - this can be any user and any email address. Actions: You can add a field for file attachment. Actions: You can add a field for sending a copy of the message to the user who fills out the contact form. A copy will be sent to the email ad... By BestWebSoft.
Contact Form Maker Details: Install Now	1.4.8	★★★★☆	Contact form maker Demo Demo Admin User Manual Frequently Asked Questions Support Forum Contact Form Maker is a sophisticated and user-friendly contact form builder for making application forms. You can add an unlimited number of fields, including different types of text input fields (password, address, e-mail, phone, etc.), captcha, map (multiple locations are supported), and submission buttons. ... By http://web-dorado.com/.
Contact Form by vCita Details: Install Now	3.1.0	★★★★☆	vCita's contact form wordpress plugin is designed to generate more leads from your website. It uniquely combines a simple setup for any website, with customization according to any color scheme and branding, in addition to online scheduling and management of all client interactions. vCita Contact Form is a simple, free and easy-to-use WordPress contact form plugin. Use our well-designed Cont... By vCita.com.

Now you'll see your search results. Simply read the names and descriptions on the list and click **Install Now** for the plugin you want to install and use. You'll be asked if you're sure you want to install the plugin, click **OK**.

More information about Contact Form 3.43

Description Installation Screenshots Changelog FAQ

Description

Contact Form allows you to add a feedback form to a post or a page in an easy manner.

[FAQ Support](#)

Features

- Actions: You can choose where to send the messages - this can be any user and any email address.
- Actions: You can add a field for file attachment.
- Actions: You can add a field for sending a copy of the message to the user who fills out the contact form. A copy will be sent to the email address specified while filling the contact form.
- Label: There is a possibility to change a label when the fields are displayed.

Translation

- Arabic (ar) (thanks to Hammad Alshammari (ABU HATIM), <http://www.abuhatim.net>)
- Belarusian (be_BY) (thanks to [Sakaŭoŭ Alaksiej](#))
- Bulgarian (bg_BG) (thanks to Martin Jekov)
- European Portuguese (pt_PT) (thanks to [César Silva](#), <http://www.clubetelemoveis.com>)
- Brazilian Portuguese (pt_BR) (thanks to [Breno Jacinto](#), <http://www.iconis.org.br>)
- Czech (cs_CZ) (thanks to Petr Zlátný)

Install Now

FYI

Version: 3.43
Author: [BestWebSoft](#)
Last Updated: 21 days ago
Requires WordPress Version: 2.9 or higher
Compatible up to: 3.5.1
Downloaded: 787,735 times
[WordPress.org Plugin Page >](#)
[Plugin Homepage >](#)

Average Rating
★★★★☆
(based on 120 ratings)

Alternatively you can click **Details** to view more info about any plugin before you choose to install it. Then you can either press the **X** button to go back to the search results, or **Install Now**.

Installing Plugin: Contact Form 3.43

Downloading install package from <http://downloads.wordpress.org/plugin/contact-form-plugin.3.43.zip...>

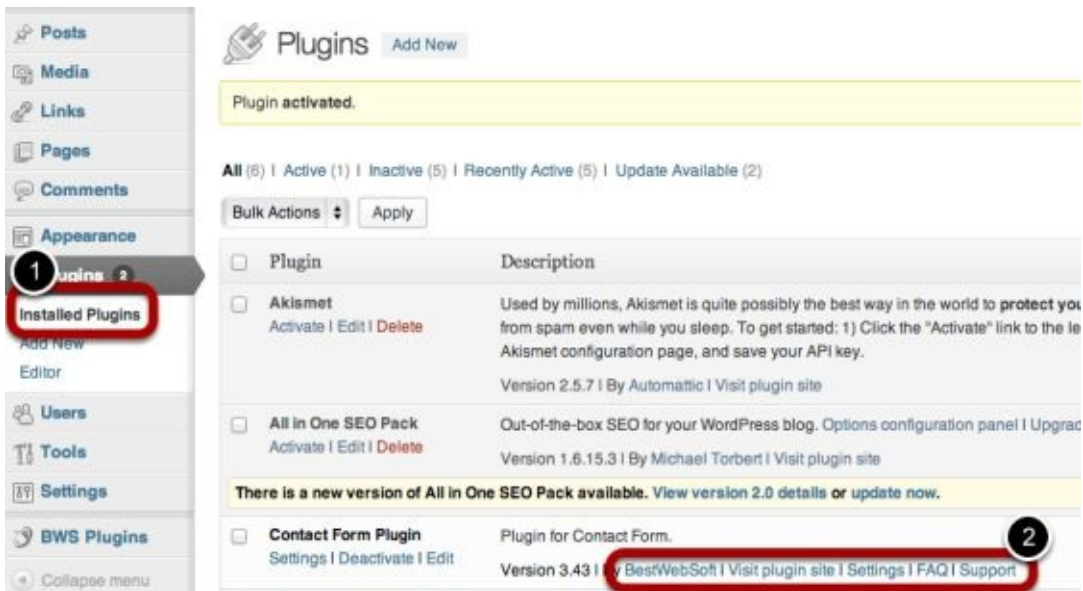
Unpacking the package...

Installing the plugin...

Successfully installed the plugin **Contact Form 3.43**.

Activate Plugin [Return to Plugin Installer](#)

After you install a plugin, you'll see a screen like this. You won't be able to use your plugin until you click **Activate Plugin**.



Now that your plugin is installed and activated, you can go ahead and use it, or you can repeat the process to install further plugins.

Note that every plugin is designed differently. Many of them will add an option to the WordPress Settings menu. Many, however, will add their own options link.

If you can't find a settings page for the particular plugin you just installed, click **Installed Plugins** from the WordPress plugins menu, and scroll down the list of plugins until you find a documentation link for the one you're interested in.

For the contact form plugin example, you can see it's now installed and showing up on our plugins list. Within that list there's also links to the plugin FAQ and support sites for more information.

How to Install a Free or Paid WordPress Plugin from a Zip File



Some plugins aren't available through the WordPress dashboard. This is true with paid plugins and some free plugins. Not to worry, it's still easy to install them!

Simply download the plugin zip file from the developer and then click **Add New** in the WordPress plugins menu, like you did before. When you get to the search screen, click **Upload** instead of searching for a plugin.



Next, click the **Choose File** button, and select the plugin file from its location on your hard drive.



Like you did in the steps above, be sure to click **Activate Plugin** once your plugin zip file has uploaded.

Easy, right?! Now all you need to do is use your plugin like any other plugin. Some paid plugins may require you to enter a product key, so be sure to refer to their own documentation.

NOTE: It is important to pay attention to your installation of any plugin and read the writings on each plugin you may want to use. Some plugins do not play nice with each other so you'll need to pick and choose based on your theme and compatibility issues.

Updating Your WordPress Plugins



Bear in mind that things on the internet are always changing and being improved. WordPress plugins are no different, which is why you need to look out for plugin updates.

When updates are offered for your plugin, it is very important that you go ahead and upgrade as soon as possible. Do read all instructions and issues first, and get help if you need it, but most updates involve closing security loopholes as well as added functionality.

You will know if your plugin needs updating by looking in your **Dashboard**. In the example, there's a number "4" next to the **Updates** section. This shows that there are 4 updates available - this total number includes plugins, themes and your WordPress installation. Click the Updates button to see more.

WordPress Updates

Last checked on April 29, 2013 at 10:29 am. [Check Again](#)

You have the latest version of WordPress.

You have the latest version of WordPress. You do not need to update. However, if you want to

[Re-install Now](#) [Download 3.5.1](#)

While your site is being updated, it will be in maintenance mode. As soon as your updates

Plugins

The following plugins have new versions available. Check the ones you want to update and

[Update Plugins](#)

[Select All](#)

All in One SEO Pack
You have version 1.6.15.3 installed. Update to 2.0. [View version 2.0 details.](#)
Compatibility with WordPress 3.5.1: 100% (according to its author)

Jetpack by WordPress.com
You have version 2.1.1 installed. Update to 2.2.4. [View version 2.2.4 details.](#)
Compatibility with WordPress 3.5.1: 100% (according to its author)

[Select All](#)

[Update Plugins](#)

Now you'll see exactly what needs updating on your WordPress installation. On the example website, you can see that there are only two themes that need updating. You can click the blue links, as highlighted above, to view more about these updates and check for any compatibility issues or security vulnerabilities.

Plugins

The following plugins have new versions available. Check the ones you want to update

[Update Plugins](#)

[Select All](#)

All in One SEO Pack
You have version 1.6.15.3 installed. Update to 2.0. [View version 2.0 details.](#)
Compatibility with WordPress 3.5.1: 100% (according to its author)

Jetpack by WordPress.com
You have version 2.1.1 installed. Update to 2.2.4. [View version 2.2.4 details.](#)
Compatibility with WordPress 3.5.1: 100% (according to its author)

[Select All](#)

[Update Plugins](#)

Now you can select which plugins you want to update.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Make sure you backup your WordPress installation before updating any of your plugins! Backing up is a good idea before you make any major changes on your site, because things can go wrong.

To update, select the checkbox next to the plugin name, and click the **Update Plugins** button. In this example, I am updating the Jetpack plugin.



The update process is starting. This process may take a while on some hosts, so please be patient.

Updating Plugin Jetpack by WordPress.com (1/1)

Jetpack by WordPress.com updated successfully. [Show Details.](#)

All updates have been completed.

[Return to Plugins page](#) | [Return to WordPress Updates](#)

Now you'll see a page while the update is in progress. It's very important that you **do not** close this page or click away until you see the update completed message, as shown above.

Now your plugin has been updated - easy! You can go back and repeat this progress whenever you need to.

How to Use WordPress Widgets

Like plugins, widgets add superb functionality to your website, making it easier to change and add things without coding it yourself.

You may see a theme advertised as “widget ready”. Really a widget is a plugin, but it’s a special plugin designed to arrange how your site is laid out. For instance, widgets are used to add content to the sidebar, add a search bar, or other content that you can arrange, show, or remove from various areas of your website or blog.

Many widgets are already included with WordPress, but others are added when you install plugins.

You don’t need to understand any code at all to use widgets in your WordPress site. There are many widgets that come with basic WordPress that you may not think of as widgets such as post categories, tags, site navigation, search boxes, and so on.

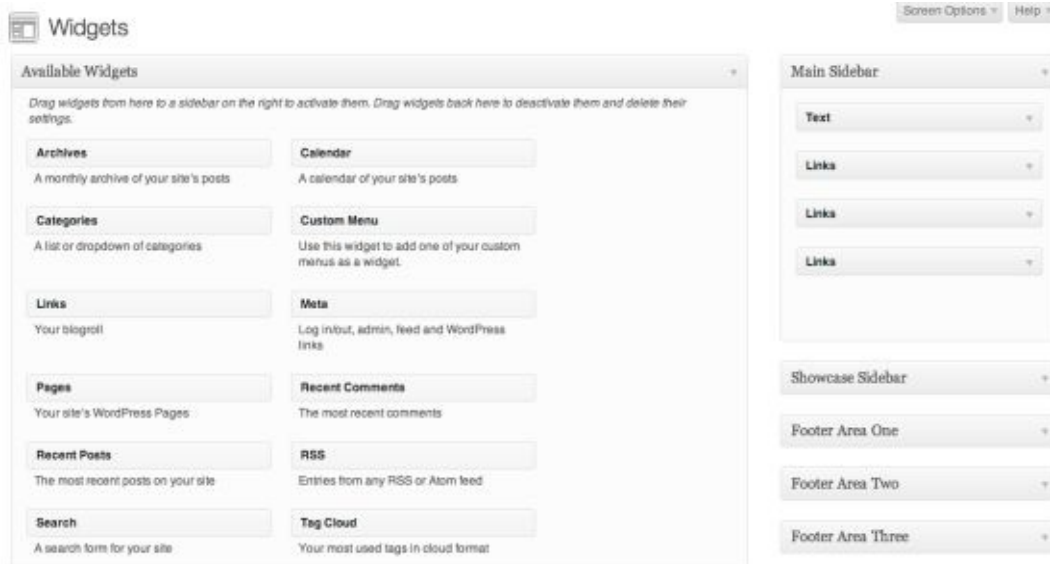
Also remember that a plugin sometimes adds widgets as well. They simply make your site more user friendly to anyone who visits by providing a clean layout to your content. What’s really awesome is they’re as easy to take away as they are to add. Don’t like the look? Just uninstall it, or inactivate it.

Here’s how to do it...

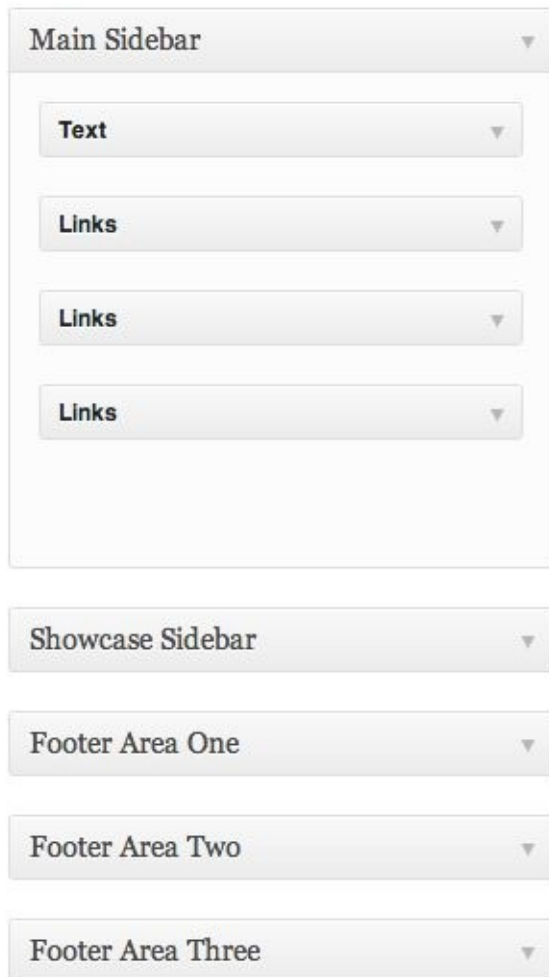
How to Access Widget Options



You can see widgets by going to your **Dashboard**, then **Appearance**, and then click on **Widgets**.

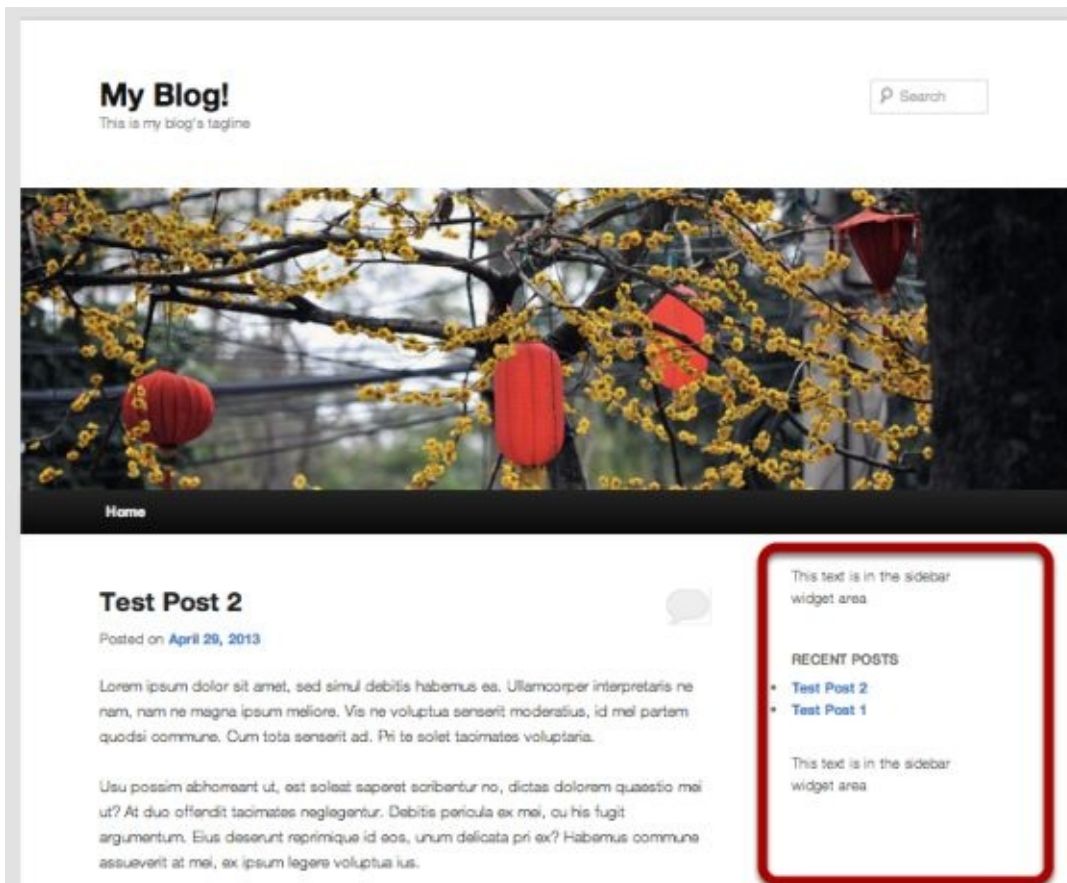


Now you can see what widgets you already have. Many themes give you a basic selection of widgets already added to your blog, but some will be blank.



Let's take a closer look at that widget screen. On the right hand side, you'll see the different areas available for you to add widgets.

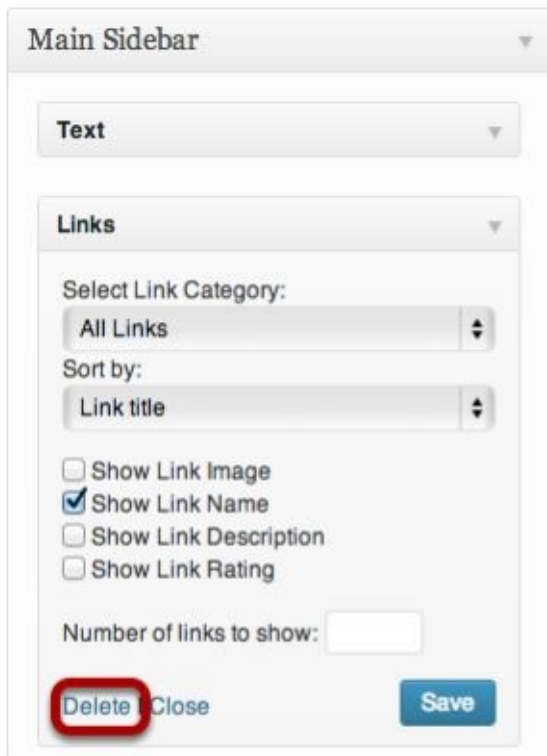
As you can see from this example, the theme we're using lets us add widgets to the main sidebar, as well as different footer areas. Your theme may have more or less widgets areas, but the sidebar is almost always included and this is the most popular place for adding widgets. This is what we'll focus on for in this section of the book.



Not sure what the sidebar is? Here you can see it in the example - it runs all the way down the page to the right of the main blog content.

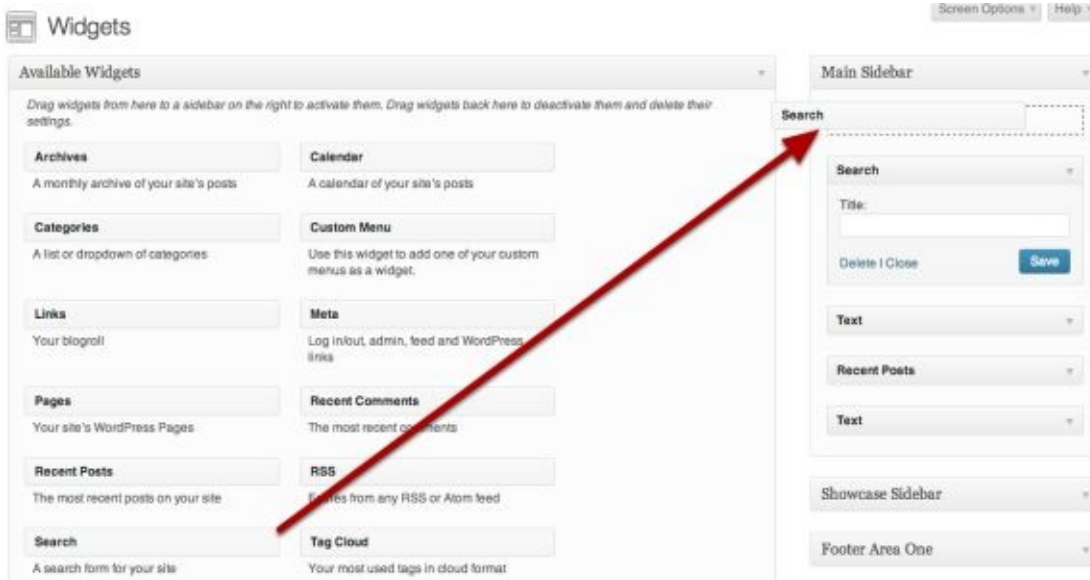
Different themes have different sidebars - some are on the left of the page instead of the right, some have more than one, and some may not have a sidebar at all (although this is rare).

[How to Delete A Widget](#)



To remove any widget that's already there, first click the arrow next to the widget name, then press **Delete**.

How to Add New Widgets to Your Site



To add a new widget, select the type of widget you'd like from the **Available Widgets** section of the widget page, and drag it over to the area you want it to be placed. In this example, we'll be installing a search box widget.

Note, you can also click and drag the widgets around once they're already in the sidebar, if you want to reorder them.



Next, click the arrow next to the widget name that you just installed, and you can configure the settings for that particular widget.

In this case, we are able to enter the title for the widget (e.g. “Search this Site”). When you’re done, click **Save**.

You can always go back and edit the options again at a later date, or delete the widget, by clicking the grey arrow to expand the widget options.



Continue adding and rearranging the widgets you want. Now you can see what they look like by visiting your site. As you can see, our search widget is now there!

Top 10 WordPress Security Tips

You can install WordPress, add a post, page, theme and adjust the widgets... it's now time to look at securing your WordPress website.

It would be hard to overstate the popularity of WordPress as a web publishing platform. Between the fully hosted blogs at WordPress.com and the self-hosted blog software that's available for download WordPress.org, there are hundreds of millions of sites running on the WordPress platform. This makes WordPress a great resource for individuals and businesses looking to create their first websites.

But it also makes WordPress websites a popular target for hackers. Since having your website hacked can be devastating to your business, it's important to make sure you're doing everything you can to stay secure.

Here are the top 10 WordPress security tips you should consider. (Note that some of these tips will apply only if you host your own WordPress installation, but not if you use the services at WordPress.com.)

Keep Your WordPress Install Up To Date.

Sometimes the strongest security tips are also the easiest to implement. Every time you login to your WordPress dashboard, check the top of the screen to see if a new version of WordPress is available. Because security fixes to the underlying WordPress code are distributed through these updates, it's important to make sure you're always running the current version of the software. You should also make sure all your WordPress plugins are also up to date.

An updated version of WordPress is available.

You can update to [WordPress 3.5.1](#) automatically or download the package and install it manually:



2. Make Backups.

Having backups of your WordPress site not only provides protection in case your site is compromised, it also acts as an insurance policy in case something happens with your web host. It's certainly possible to manage the backup process manually, but there are plugins you can use to make the process much easier, including [UpdraftPlus Backup](#) and [Simple Backup](#). Make sure to keep those backup files in a secure location as well.



3. Don't Use "Admin" or Your Email Address For Your Username.

Not all hacking consists of high-level computer manipulation; quite often WordPress sites are compromised by someone guessing the site administrator's username and password. Unfortunately, if you use "admin" or your e-mail address for your username, then a hacker is already halfway towards reaching their goal. It's much more secure if you make your username something that would be as difficult to guess as a strong password.



4. Limit The Number of Failed of Login Attempts.

A persistent hacker may not be sufficiently dissuaded from attacking your site if they can simply use a "brute force" attack to try to guess your username and password. You can use a plugin like [Simple Login Lockdown](#) to detect failed logins from a particular IP address and significantly reduce the threat of these brute force attacks. This plugin will block an IP address from accessing your login page for one hour when there are five successive failed attempts — although the lockout time and number of attempts can be changed.



5. Make Sure Your Themes are Secure.

Hackers should not be your only security concern. Given the seemingly endless number of sources for WordPress themes, you need to be confident that you're not using a theme with any malicious code. You can use a plugin such as [Theme Authenticity Checker](#) to identify any potential problematic code that may have been added to an otherwise valid theme.



6. Additional Login Authentication.

The [Login Dongle](#) plugin provides an additional layer of login protection. This plugin installs a bookmarklet in your browser, and asks you to create a secret challenge and response text. When you go to your login page, after entering your standard username and password, you then click the bookmark and fill in the proper response code before you can log in. This creates an additional level of authentication security for your blog.



7. Do a Security Scan.

Unfortunately, it won't always be clear to you when you've been hacked. Sometimes hackers want to use your server space for activities that may not be apparent simply by viewing your site. You can use a plugin such as [Exploit Scanner](#) to automatically search through the files on your site for anything potentially suspicious.



8. Consider a Multi-Tiered Security Manager.

[Wordfence Security](#) is a multi-pronged security plugin that adds a firewall to your website, as well as virus scanning, real-time traffic analysis, the ability to see any changes to your core WordPress files, and many other functions. Wordfence is installed in my site and all my clients sites.



9. Secure Your wp-config.php File.

Your wp-config.php file contains very important information about your WordPress site, including details on the databases that contain all of your posts and comments. You can keep this file more secure by [following the tutorial here](#).

Don't give a hacker access to your private information in this file:

10. Protect Your WordPress Directories.

Finally, you can protect your underlying WordPress directories by adding the code "Options -indexes" to the very beginning of your .htaccess file. If you've never worked with a particular file before, then this is another one that you may wish to contact your web host or Webmaster for help on. You can also [consult this tutorial](#).

WordPress provides you with the ability to make a powerful and professional website without spending a penny on software. Make sure to get the most out of your site by keeping it secure.

When Plugins go nuts...

If you use WordPress as your blogging software (and why wouldn't you ;)) you'll know all about the extended functionality you can add to you blog as via Plugins. As we are also talking about WordPress security, it's only right that we should discuss that to do when plugins go wrong...

Plugin Mania

One of the first things I get asked when I hand over the key to a new WordPress blog is “what plugins do I need?”, which always leads to the conversation about what you want to use the plugins for.

Sometimes you don't need a plugin at all as the functionality is in the theme. An example of this is “breadcrumb navigation”, if you use the [Genesis](#) framework this is a standard feature. If you use another theme ([Thesis](#)) it may not be a standard feature and you may have to code it in or use a plugin.

It can be a heady thing seeing the variety of plugins and knowing that there are free as well as premium plugins that will take your WordPress site beyond just blogging.

Coding or Plugins?

Coding every single time.... if you can't add some code to your theme then talk to someone who can.

If you have no budget you can attempt it yourself, but be prepared to have to get an expert in if you wreck your blog :).

What do you do when plugins go nuts?

Plugin conflicts.

Too much of anything can be dangerous, moderation is best, except for when it comes to chocolate.. There are two things to keep in mind when installing plugins:

- Too many plugins can slow down your site and eat up bandwidth.
- Too many of the same plugin type can cause conflicts and clashes.

Even the best plugin can also let unexpected security risks slip through your “doors” — if they are not regularly updated.

Plugin developers provide new versions frequently. They provide updates to address glitches and bugs, but often the reason there's an upgrade is because

someone has discovered a security leak, or leak potential etc in the plugin's coding. So to help prevent **plugin conflict** you need to update your plugins often.

How to De-bug Faulty Manual Plugin Installations

One of the most frequent causes of *plugin conflict* can be through manually installing a plugin via your FTP. Occasionally this manual upload process via FTP won't work which can be incredibly frustrating. There are two things you can do to fix it...

Make sure your plugin is there – Open your FTP program again to make sure it's actually in the right folder (wp-content/plugins). If it's not there (it does happen!) upload it again.

If it is there breathe a sigh of relief and delete right from the server, then upload again

If it still doesn't work, check out your unzipped plugin folder very thoroughly: Is there a second folder within the folder (“double wrapping”)? If so, delete the unsuccessful upload and start again, this time using the folder within the folder only.

Plugins: To Zip or Unzip?

Remember, if you're manually uploading via WordPress, keep your plugin folder zipped.

If you're uploading via FTP, unzip first (unless the plugin developer states otherwise). Remember to click “Activate”, once your plugin appears in your installed plugins page.

Read the instructions first when it comes to installing the plugins you want, it's the difference between a perfect blog and a mess that you have to sort out over a day or so whilst you are trying to do other things.

Dealing with a plugin conflict

Not all plugins play nicely with each other! If you have a plugin conflict, deactivate the last plugin you installed and chill out for a moment.

- Is the plugin essential?
- Is it vital, will your whole world fall apart without it?

If so then the next step is deactivate all of the plugins and then reactivate them one by one to see which one is causing the grief. Can you live without that plugin? If so, un-install it and delete it. As I recently found out even un-installing and deleting some plugins isn't enough to get rid of them and the hassle they have caused! In which case you need to pick up the phone and call someone in as quite clearly it's a plugin gone rogue.

Of course there can be other reasons why plugins go nuts

Too many of the same types of plugin can cause problems. Do you really need 6 different versions of stats on your blog? Or 4 different SEO plugins? Choose one type and stick with it. When you change plugins for one thing often, you undo the work that you have already done. Some SEO related plugins take a little while to kick in and if you are not using them correctly then they may never deliver the results that you think they will. Installing another SEO plugin on top of that is not the cure 😊

Incorrectly configured plugins may be a pain, again read the instructions, and dare I say it... do as you are advised.

Publishing Your Content

After all the hard work of setting up your business blog, it now comes down to the most important reason of having a blog in the first place - getting your content, your message out to the world.

For some, this is an easy process. For many others however, publishing useful and unique content regularly can be severely daunting. Distinguishing yourself from other business bloggers takes a bit of understanding of who your core readers are.

Put some time aside to research your audience and find out what they would like to read about. Here are some considerations to bear in mind when publishing your content:

- Should I make my posts educational, newsworthy, informational, entertaining and debatable or, a combination of all those?
- How long should my posts be?
- Should I consider blogging partnerships (*like getting guest bloggers to write unique content for your blog*)?

The initial excitement of publishing a blog can quickly dissipate when your “content well” starts to dry up. So where do you turn to for ideas and inspiration to get readers queuing up to read your work? Well, let’s start with how you can categorize your content in a way that could potentially skyrocket your readership:

- The infamous Top 10 lists
- How-To information
- Reviews
- Interview someone within your business niche
- Present relevant business case-studies
- Latest trends and newsworthy information

- Recommend other business blogs that might be of interest to your readers

But all the above may be rendered useless if you can't get to a source for inspiration. So here are some of the best places to visit when you need to get those creative juices flowing:

- News sites – CNN, Yahoo News, Google News are just some of many News websites available to spark an interesting idea for a blog post. Dig into News stories and press releases to see what is significant for your blog. Cast your opinion on it and you've just got yourself a new post. But don't stop there.

Look for News sites that are specific to your industry as well. For example, if you're blogging about finance, head on over to Bloomberg Financial News and get ideas from there. About.com is another site that covers a gamut of topics that makes for such a great source for content ideas.

- Online Groups / Social Networking sites / Forums – Message board forums, Facebook Groups and Yahoo Groups are a wealth of information. Your potential readers and customers could be lurking within these groups, freely exchanging the kind of information a market research company would pay thousands of dollars for.

Don't ignore forums that are relevant to your industry. Like social networking sites and online groups, forums attract the kind of audience that could be interested in the information you are offering.

- Social Bookmarking Services – Like social networking sites, social bookmarking services are all the rage today. These services allow users to rate and recommend topics that are popular with them. They are a portal into the hottest and latest trends as deemed by public opinion.

Visit sites such as Technorati.com, Delicious, StumbleUpon.com, Reddit.com and Digg.com to get blogging ideas. While there are a great number of other social bookmarking sites springing up onto the web quite regularly, those are the most referred to by professional bloggers for research.

- High Traffic Sites – Another fantastic source of blogging ideas can be found at high

traffic sites such as Alexa.com, Amazon.com, Ebay.com, Craigslist.org and Wikipedia.org. A wealth of ideas can be mined just from sifting through these sites' categories.

- Article Directories – Article directories offer you the option of re-printing the articles of your choice on your blog. This can come in handy if you're having an off day but need something to whet the appetite of your readers. Even if you don't intend to publish any of those articles, use them as a source of ideas for writing your next post.

Some of the more popular directories are EzineArticles.com, GoArticles.com and ArticleCity.com. These articles are free to re-print but, read the terms on these sites on how to go about re-printing them. I don't recommend doing this, but I do recommend curating content from these sources, see the content curation section.

- Some Other Sources – Another idea-generating method is to look out for what people are searching for and decide if you could blog about these search terms. Visit popular sites like Google Zeitgeist and MetaCrawler.com for this purpose. You can use keywords tools like WordTracker.com.

Try searching for ideas using blog search engines as well. Try Technorati.com and AllTop.com for potential ideas.

The next step is to create a folder on your desktop for ideas. Call it an idea bank, call it resources or inspiration. Choose a name that will remind you the purpose on the content inside. My folder is called Inspiration.

There's also a brilliant online tool that will help you collate your inspiration and populate an idea bank online. It's called Evernote. In this section I'm going to show you how to set up and use Evernote.

What's Evernote got to do with my website?

Once your website is set up you'll need to manage it and create a constant stream of content to grow an audience. Evernote is an easy way to remember your daily to-do lists, your memories or just your daily reminders.

Evernote allows you to store everything you want to remember in your account. It's then synced across all your devices, from your smartphone to computer to tablets. This makes it easier to capture, browse edit or search your notes from anywhere. This means your time is used more efficiently and you're more productive.

When you are stuck for an idea Evernote is a great starting point. When you need to add your sources to a post, then Evernote is a place to link them together so you don't lose them.

This guide serves as an overview and introduction to using Evernote the how to get your account set up.

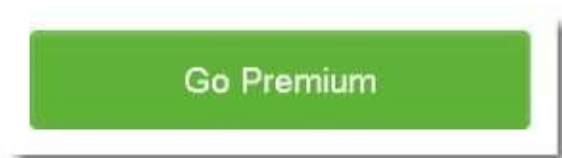
What is Evernote?

With Evernote you can create lists, reminders, images, web pages and much more. Evernote is a free application that allows you to capture all your ideas and experiences and access them from anywhere. You can make a note to remind you of something, record audio or capture a video.

You can use it to stay more organized. Or design and manage all your projects. Use Evernote to plan a trip. You can capture a moment you want to remember and easily find it later.

Evernote Premium

Although the basic Evernote system is free, there is an option to upgrade to a premium account for more storage space. For a few dollars a month or a small annual fee, you can get 1 GB of upload space each month. You can then store more notes, photos and files.



With the premium account, you can search smarter. With the upgrade, searching inside PDFs or other attached documents is easier. There is also the Related Notes feature that allows you to see your previous relevant notes while you create or view the new ones.

Premium loads notes faster on your mobile devices. And with the PinLock you get peace of mind with an added layer of protection on your mobile devices.

The language of Evernote:

Here are a few terms you need to know

- Note: A single item stored in Evernote.
- Notebook: A container for notes, where your notes are stored.
- Sync: This is the process of how your Evernote notes are kept up to date across all of your devices, including computers, phones and the Web.
- Account: This is simply the username and password you need so Evernote can identify your notes and make them available to you anywhere.

Install Evernote

First you need to download the installation software. Open your web browser to the Evernote web site, <http://evernote.com/>. Evernote will detect the type of device you are using. So if you have a Mac or a PC you will be installing the right software for you device.

To download, click the “Get Evernote for Windows” button – or the dropdown arrow to change the device.



- For PC's download the setup executable file. When the download finishes, double-click the file to launch the setup program. Click finish when the setup is complete.
- For Macs, click on the link to install.

To launch Evernote, click on the Evernote icon.

Log in to your account if you have already registered by entering your username and password. If you haven't registered for an account, go to the “Get a free account now” button.

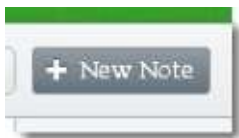


This link opens a new window so you can put your information in and choose a username and password. Go ahead & click the Register button when you are done. Your account is now created and you can immediately login.

Creating Your First Note

The most common form of content saved in Evernote is simple text. It can be as simple as a note to yourself or a part of a web page or email you want to remember. Here is how you create your first note with this type of content.

At the top of the main Evernote page is a button labeled “New Note”. Click this.



Evernote creates the new note with the cursor in the body of that note. Title it with whatever you like. Now you need to click anywhere in the main part of the note. Go ahead and begin typing here. You can change the style of the text font, increase or decrease the size of the font or even change the color while working on your note. There are options for bold, italicize or underline the text as well.

When you finish, Evernote automatically saves and synchronizes the new note to Evernote on the web. Your note can then be accessed from any device you have Evernote installed.

Understanding Evernote Sync

Evernote’s true power is in its synchronization ability. By synchronizing your notes to the Evernote on the Web, you are able to create and find your stuff on any web browser, mobile phone or any computer.

So basically, when you clip a recipe from the web on to your Mac, you can read it on your iPhone when you go the grocery store to get ingredients. That same recipe can be accessed from a friend’s Windows PC. Evernote on the web is continually updating all your devices with the most current versions of your notes.

Evernote automatically synchronizes your information every few minutes. If you want however, you can sync manually anytime by clicking the “Sync” button.

Reminders

Reminders let you keep track of your time-sensitive notes.

A reminder can be set for any note by clicking the Reminder icon on that note. You can also set a due date with the date picker.



Reminders will appear in your To-do list located at the top of your NoteList. You can sort them, put them in order, and edit them and much more

That's the basics of installing Evernote onto your devices. Within the Evernote website you will find more information on using Evernote for different devices in the Knowledgebase section. Evernote is the perfect way to get and stay organized using any device anywhere you are.

Evernote is a great time saver, but it won't do you any good if it's unorganized.

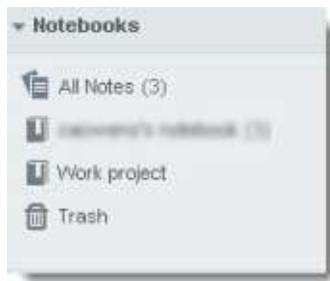
Notebooks are the most common way users organize notes. They can be used to separate them by locations, purpose or categories.

Evernote gives you many ways to keep your notes organized, so that you can browse, search and remember in the way that works best for you.

When you create notes and put them into notebooks, Evernote creates a default notebook where all your notes are placed. You can add more notebooks and stacks of notebooks to completely organize your life and business.

Creating a New Notebook

When you are ready to create a new notebook, click on Notebooks in the sidebar. This brings up the Notebook List.



To create a new Notebook, click the “+ New Notebook” button. This creates an unnamed Notebook in your list. Give it a title and press enter.

You can begin adding notes immediately or at any time.

Tip: Try not to create too many notebooks. The idea of Evernote is to help you get organized, not to get overwhelmed.

Notebooks you might want to create: Business blogging ideas, Business or work, Bills, blogging schedule, holidays and dates of interest of target audience, Daily or any interest or business you are currently participating in or exploring.

Adding Notes to a Notebook

Click on the Notebook in the Notebook List you want to add notes to when you are ready to begin.

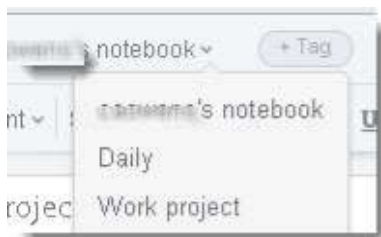
Click on the +New Note button to open the note pad. Enter your information. It will automatically be saved.

To Move a Note

Click on the Notes/All Notes in the sidebar. The Note list is displayed.

Click on the one you want to move. It will show up in the Note Editor.

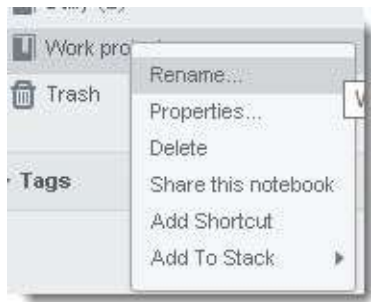
In the Note editor, click on the notebook drop-down list in the upper-left corner. All of your notebooks will show. Click on the one you want to move your note into. Evernote automatically saves and syncs the change.



Rename a Notebook

Sometimes you need to rename your notebooks for some reason. This can be done by selecting the one you want to change in the Notebook List. Right-click on to the notebook

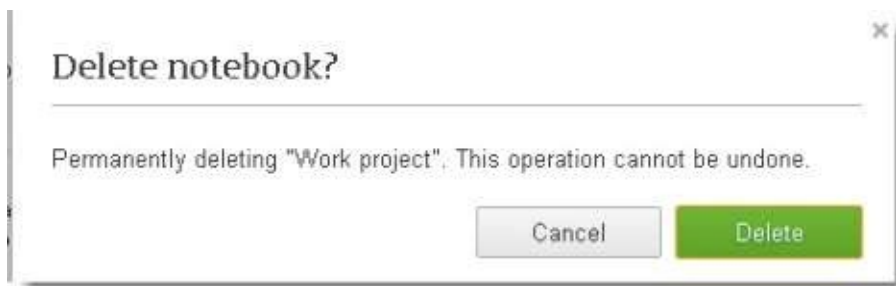
name. Then click on rename. Enter the new name in the box that opens..



Delete a Notebook

You can delete a notebook. Just remember that all the notes within that notebook will be moved to the Trash Notebook.

Click on the Notebook in the Notebook List. To delete it, control-click or right-click on it to bring up the menu. Click on Delete Notebook. A confirmation box appears. Click delete to remove the notebook.



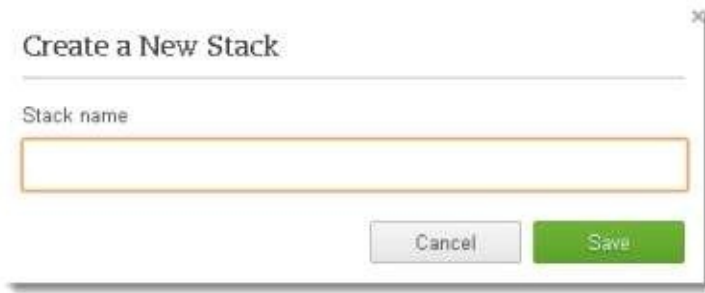
Organize Your Notebooks

You can organize multiple notebooks by using Notebook Stacks.

Notebook Stacks are most often used for grouping similar topics or theme notebooks together. For example, you could create a Stack called School then add Notebooks for each child or each sport or other activity.

Notebook Stacks appear in your Notebook List as a notebook with a white banner with the name of the stack and how many notebooks it contains.

To create a Notebook Stack, click on Notebooks in the sidebar. Drag one notebook onto another notebook in the same category. A stack that has both notebooks is automatically created. Give the stack a name.



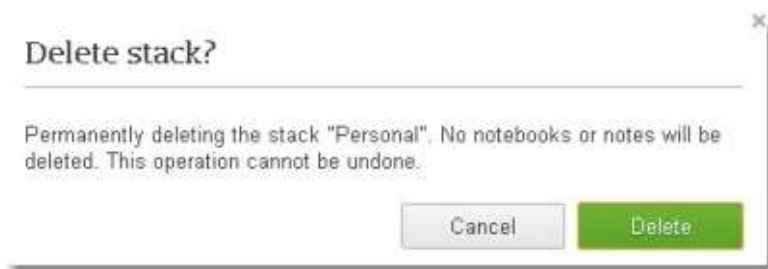
Add to a notebook to a Notebook Stack

Adding a notebook to an already created Stack by dragging and dropping the selected notebook to the Stack.

Delete a Notebook Stack

You can delete a Notebook Stack without deleting any of the notebooks or notes it has in it.

Control-click or Right-click on the Notebook Stack you want to delete. Click on delete from the menu. Click delete on the confirmation box.



Shortcuts

Shortcuts are another way to access the notes and notebooks you frequently use.

You can find shortcuts listed under the SHORTCUTS at the top of the sidebar. Shortcuts can be created for notebooks, notes, Notebook Stacks and Tags.

Add a shortcut by dragging and dropping the notebook anywhere on your shortcuts sidebar. Evernote allows you to have up to 250 shortcuts. To create multiple shortcuts at a time, hold the Shift key while clicking on the notebooks you want to select. Drag these anywhere into the shortcuts sidebar.

You can delete a shortcut by clicking on it and dragging it out of the shortcuts sidebar.

Evernote Notebooks User Tips

Forward reference material from your email inbox to your notebooks using your personalized Evernote account mailing address that can be found in your account info. Add the “@” symbol in front of your emails that you want associated to current or active projects.

Use the “@” in the front of your notebook name. This places the active notebooks at the top of your list.

Keep your travel plans organized by keeping itineraries, contact information, reservations and anything else need for your trip in a “Travel” notebook. Forward itineraries from you inbox or take pictures and put into your notebook.

Evernote Notebooks are the main tool users use to organize their notes in Evernote. The Evernote Notebook has features that let create a system of organization that works for you and keeps your content ideas in a safe place.

Section 2

Welcome Challenger...

Your blog's set up and you're raring to go! These daily challenges will push you out of your comfort zone and help you become a stronger, more efficient blogger and set you up to blog successfully.

9 reasons you should take part in a blogging challenge?

1. Blogging can be a solitary activity at times. It can seem like you're calling into a void, and the only response is an echo. When you take part in a blogging challenge there's camaraderie; you make friends fast.
2. You meet new people. Yep, you might comment a lot on the blogs in your own niche, but what about outside of it? The best ideas and inspiration often come from other niches and then adapted to your own. A blogging challenge is a great way to meet new people in diverse niches.
3. It's a marathon and not a sprint. You complete blogging challenges while building up your discipline and stamina. I call it exercising your writing muscle.
4. When you blog for a set period of time you establish a solid writing routine.
5. You get a good set of data to analyse. When you do a blogging challenge you work a little bit harder on your blogging. This means you'll start using keywords, an editorial calendar and all the things you should be doing but don't currently do
6. You'll increase traffic and you'll grow subscribers, but as you can see traffic isn't the only great thing about a blogging challenge.
7. You'll uncover what you truly love when it comes to content creation and what you don't
8. At the end of a blogging challenge you'll have enough material for a book, a new lead magnet or something else
9. You'll become smarter at marketing your blog posts and knowing what works for you

Who's this blogging challenge not for?

- If you sign up for everything, to every shiny thing out there then this isn't for you.
- If you have no intention of growing your writing muscle, if you prefer to do things your way and are not open to learning other ways and from other people (not just me), then you won't like this at all.
- If you can't make your business work, and you'd like a distraction from the pressures of life, then this really isn't for you.
- If you expect perfection. **Perfection is an ideal not a must have.** If you are caught in the trap of perfection you'll not enjoy this blogging challenge.
- If you don't like being accountable and if you don't like sharing your successes as well as what's not worked, then this really isn't for you.
- If your blog posts are thinly disguised sales pitches then trust me when I say this will not work for you at all, and not only that, unless you're willing to shape up, we don't want you.

If you're still here and you like the straight talking, then let's get started, right now. You'll love it.

Day Zero: Welcome to the 30 day blogging challenge.

I love blogging. By the end of this challenge you will too.

Let's talk rewards... there's risk and reward associated with everything you do, and blogging is no different. If you complete all 30 days consecutively you'll be rewarded with a weekly badge to go on your website so the world knows you're not a quitter.

Other rewards include being found better in the search engines, increased social proof and the ability to network with others building their blog too. Some of the Challengers have doubled and trebled their traffic in the first few days, another gained a client on her 3rd post. Her first ever through blogging.

Housekeeping and what you need to know.

If you have questions please ask them in the Facebook group. My inbox is a mess, and as much as I'd love to give you a private answer, I just don't have the time.

If you're struggling to find the time to write your blog posts getting up a little earlier is the way to make sure it happens.

Click the links. Not all the daily challenges and encouragement

will be on my site. I'm blessed with blogging friends who will host a day. If you don't click the links you'll miss out. You'll also miss out on your badges.

Join the Facebook accountability group.

When you've done your post for the day go in and post in in the group. If you see others posted give those a "like" and a comment to keep them encouraged.

Any questions? Ask in the Facebook group. If your inbox is anything like mine, questions will be missed and you'll feel unloved. Ask in the group. Tag me in the group. And if you know the answer to someone's question then answer them.

Be prepared to comment.

Comments benefit you in many ways. I'm going to ask you to comment on the challenges. When you comment you get leave a link back to your website. This is a good thing.

People read a blog post and then look at the comments. And if they like what you've said then they'll click the link and visit your website.

Comments lead to traffic. They lead to people discovering you and your blog. If you have a few minutes to spare, comment on other people in the group.

By supporting each other you'll find your tribe.

Day 1 of the 30 day blogging challenge.

Posting for 30 consecutive days is no easy thing to do... it's really tough at times. So we have to toughen up and prepare ourselves for writing 30 different posts.

On our first day we're going to take a look at what we can write blog posts about and I've also put together a list of blog post prompts you can use.

<http://www.whatisablog.co.uk/what-do-i-blog-about/>

Remember to leave a comment on the post (they'll be extra gifts for regular commenters).

Bonus tip not mentioned in the article - BCC any emails you write to clients and prospects to yourself. Over a few weeks you'll create a fantastic swipe file of questions and answers that can be used to create blog posts with. Remember, you saw it here first :)

Day 2 of the 30 day business blogging challenge.

Yesterday we looked at what you can blog about, I shared 31 different blogging prompts and showed you how they work.

Today we're going to look at Keywords.

Keywords help you get found by both your readers and the search engines. They are not the only search engine ranking factors though, so don't go keyword crazy.

<http://www.sarkemedia.com/using-keywords/>

Don't panic if keywords are not coming to you naturally. I've been blogging since late 2006, and did my first 30 day challenge in 2007 and they still get me.

We're on day 2 of this 30 day challenge and by day 30 you'll understand keywords a whole lot better than you think.

You know if you start dreaming in keywords it's time to pack it up ;), so don't dwell on them.

Today's challenge - create a list of Keywords and Phrases you'd like to be known for. Use one of those phrases in your blog post's headline, again in the opening paragraph and in the closing paragraph.

Post your completed blog post in the Facebook group.

Any questions, ask in the Facebook group. We're here to help you get the most from your blogging. There are no silly questions, just questions that we've not yet covered!

Bonus Tool

I use this tool [here](#) to source keywords. There's a 30 day free trial and if you wish to buy it, please wait for a few days as then the company will give you a 50% discount.

Day 3 of the 30 day business blogging challenge.

Yesterday we covered keywords and touched upon optimising the blog post in order to get found.

To get the most benefit from writing, publishing and promoting you'll need to optimise your blog posts. If you're on WordPress self-hosted you'll like WordPress SEO by Yoast. Here's a tutorial on how to use it

<http://www.sarkemedia.com/wordpress-seo-optimization-tutorial/>

If you're not using self-hosted WordPress, why not? Don't make your business look cheap by trying to promote a premium service via a free site. A self-hosted WP is a terrific credibility booster.

If you're not on WordPress then you need to take a look at what you can do to boost your SEO.

1. Make sure you're using the title tags
2. Complete any meta description areas
3. Make sure your post is able to be optimized for social

For today's activity please optimize your post for search engines and human beings.

When you've hit publish please post it up in the Facebook group and comment under the post.

Any questions? Ask in the Facebook group. We're here to help you get the most from your blogging.

Day 4 of the 30 day business blogging challenge.

We've looked at what you can blog about and there's a whole page of ideas for the 30 days.

Today we're going to look managing the whole editorial process (managing the ideas into blog posts).

Writing and publishing 30 blog posts consecutively is challenging, but you can actually post 365 days of the year, multiple times per day, if you have an editorial calendar.

Here's an editorial calendar checklist for you to get you motivated and on track:

<http://www.sarkemedia.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Checklist.pdf>

And in today's post is an editorial calendar template.

Check it out here:

<http://dannybrown.me/2014/08/26/3-types-of-editorial-calendar-to-manage-your-business-blog/>

Please leave a comment and tell us what you use already or what you're planning to use. There's a free Excel spreadsheet editorial calendar in the post for you to use as well.

Post your completed blog post, pop it in the Facebook group.

Any questions? Just ask in the Facebook group. We're here to help you get the most from your blogging. There are no silly questions.

Day 5 of the 30 day business blogging challenge.

Writing faster is the way to get more done. Sure, you can learn to type faster. I vary between 40-50 words per minute which is a fraction of the speed I typed at 20 years ago. Cue the violins.

With this in mind you'll love today's post as it's about a writing technique that we were taught in school and found no use for... until now.

Here's today's technique for better blogging.

Leave me a comment on the post and let me know if you're using outlines already or if you've got plans to.

Your outline is short, to the point and takes less than 10 minutes to create, yet can be used over and over again. Would you feel robbed if I told you this email was based on an outline that's 4 years old? Of course not, the information is updated and fresh.

Every time I use the outline, it becomes a different piece of content on the same topic.

<http://mycoachclass.co.uk/how-to-create-blog-posts-faster-using-outlines>

Any questions, ask in the Facebook group. We're here to help you get the most from your blogging and encourage and support you.

Day 6 of the 30 day business blogging challenge.

We're writing 30 blog posts and publishing them for 30 consecutive days. Well done, this isn't easy but the benefits are immense!

So exactly how much writing do you need to do?

That depends of course on the length of the blog post. How much is too much and how much is too little?

If you think your blog post is too short, ask yourself what problem does it solve? If it doesn't solve a problem ask what message does it send?

If it's not sending the right message then you might find your blog post is the wrong length!

<http://www.sarkemedia.com/how-long-should-a-blog-post-be/>

Remember you can also write in batches.

If you're in the writing flow- carry on!- don't just stop because you have today's blog post done - Write another. Write as many as you can until the creating muse has gone. You can always add these blog posts to your calendar and schedule the posts.

If you know you've a busy weekend coming up, write and then schedule the post.

If you've created 5 or 6 short and pithy posts schedule them for the next 4 Mondays or when they'll work best in your editorial calendar.

You can work smarter when you batch, write, and schedule them.

Have you noticed what incredibly strong foundations your building for your blogging activity?

Any questions, ask in the Facebook group. We're here to help you get the most from your blogging.

Day 7 of the 30 day business blogging challenge.

With any type of writing that's is going to be published online you want to take the time to come up with compelling headlines. A good headline will attract your website visitor's attention immediately, and this will entice your reader to read the entire article.

When writing your headline or title do not use all capital letters in it and avoid using punctuation. If you place a full stop or period at the end of your headline it will make the reader want to stop reading. By eliminating this punctuation your reader is more likely to continue reading your full article.

Examples of great titles are:• Titles that ask questions or provoke opinions• How to titles• Step by Step titles• Titles which stir feelings in your reader

When writing content, for online purposes, you want to try and include keywords in your titles. This will help boost your content within the search engines.

Place yourself in your reader's shoes and think of how you would search for this particular information. Then try to include these terms into your titles, headlines and sub titles.

Headlines & Your Heart's Desire

<http://www.sarkemedia.com/how-to-write-an-astonishing-headline-that-gets-clicked/>

Goodies are at the bottom of this post so get on over there!

You've got 7 posts done in the last 7 days? Then get in the Facebook group and tag me for your 7 consecutive day's badge. I'm so proud of you.

Day 8 of the 30 day business blogging challenge.

Blog post promotion and the myth that's known as free traffic.

The more visible you are, the more likely you are to be remembered. This is why Guy Kawasaki tweets a link 4 times a day; it reaches readers in all time zones.

Tweeting more often about your own content can feel a bit icky at first. But not everyone sees the tweet the first time, and there's power in repetition, ask any toddler :)

That said, you shouldn't promote your post everywhere. You should promote it where your ideal clients are. If your perfect client is on LinkedIn, that's where you should spend the majority of your time promoting your post.

If she's on Facebook... then promote there.

Paid promotion.

This isn't for everyone, but if you want to reach a specific audience then consider paying for the traffic.

Paid for traffic is the most laser-targeted traffic ever.

Facebook ads enables you to narrow down your audience and promote it to fans of other people's pages. This is the reason why I don't build a fan page. I just target the pages that have my audience. You won't hear me grousing (much) that my reach has dropped because I can reach literally anyone within a few minutes and it costs me between \$20 and \$80 a week.

Of course if you're posting every day to grow your writing and blogging skills this will become incredibly expensive, so you should only do it with your most popular content. Make sure that content has a call to action that invites people to subscribe, you want to make the most of your paid traffic.

Stumbleupon has a good advertising program for content, if your content is in the food or fashion niche you'll do incredibly well. Serious posts? Erm, not so well. But if it's quirky, for \$25 you can generate a whole heap of traffic.

Twitter Ads.

Never tried them. And I don't know anyone that has! That doesn't mean they're no good, it just means that they're not mainstream yet. If your ideal prospect is on Twitter then you need to think about how you can use this.

LinkedIn Advertising

Expensive. Looking for potential clients with money to burn? You'll find them advertising on LinkedIn ;), again I don't know any bloggers that use this method. It might be worth looking into if your perfect client is on LinkedIn.

What about free traffic?

Well the biggest myth of free traffic is that it's free. You're paying for and free traffic with a more powerful, finite commodity; time. You have options though, so that it doesn't cost you as much time:

1. Automate part it (tools like [Hootsuite](#), [Tweetadder](#) and CoSchedule).
2. Get a VA to do it
3. Use things like the Stumbleupon URL shortner
4. Use syndication sites like <http://atcontent.com/> (if you use a syndication site make sure you have a call to action in every post)

There's a lot of talk about cascades of traffic through SEO but as we're open and honest here, SEO is a slow burner. It takes time to build it up and get traffic from. It might be free, but it's still costing you time.

5. Triberr.

Tribber is like a syndicate where a group of people share each other's blog posts via Twitter. A lot of people love it and network there like crazy. Some people hate it. Try it and see what you think.

The hardest thing about blog post promotion?

What works today, might not work tomorrow and combinations of the above are what will probably work best for you.

Here's how I promote my blog posts.

<http://birdsontheblog.co.uk/get-more-eyeballs-on-your-blog-posts/>

Sarah

PS If you want to get really deep with blog post promotion then you'll love this <http://www.sarkemedia.com/promotion>

Day 9 of the 30 day business blogging challenge.

You've had a really busy 9 days. And a lot of you are digging in and getting your posts out there. Well done. I'm so proud of you.

So let's have a quick recap

You've visited What is a Blog on Day 1 and grabbed your blogging prompts. You've visited Danny Brown and got an editorial calendar template. You've visited Paula Jones and discovered outlining so you can create your blog posts faster... how about recapping for your readers?

Do a link round up style post and share with them the posts of the last 7 days.

1. Call it the Best of xxx week one. With xxx being the name of your blog.
2. List the titles of the last week's blog posts.
3. Add a description of the item on the list and press publish.
4. Add your call to action "Never miss out on another blog post subscribe here"
5. Publish

More on a link posts here <http://www.sarkemedia.com/creating-an-effective-link-post-blogging/>

A well thought out Link Post is powerful for networking and sucking in traffic. It also makes your blog post a resource and these get bookmarked and send you more traffic.

Come and share your link post in the group.

Day 10 of the 30 day business blogging challenge.

Sit down and pull up a pew. We need to talk *about us*.

Many of the group are sharing their increase in traffic and we'll also cover how to get the most from your blog. So that means we need to talk about us.

No, not me and you. We're good right? I keep on turning up in your inbox, you keep on blogging and sharing in the FB group; we're good, right?

Your about us page is a very popular page on your blog and you need to give it the once over. Is it working for you as effectively as it could be?

<http://www.sarkemedia.com/writing-about-us-pages/>

Polish up your about page and share it with us in the group. Use this as a networking opportunity and to get to know your fellow challengers better.

Day 11 of the 30 day business blogging challenge.

I love blogging. By the end of this challenge you will too.

Thank you all so much for the feedback:

- You love that you can choose your own topics
- You love that you're discovering the "why" something works on your blog
- You love visiting other brilliant bloggers and seeing their sites and their work
- You love the surge in traffic
- You don't love the amount of time taken

I get that. You need to build a strong foundation for your blogging. You're building up your writing muscle and that takes time. I'm sure you already know it's stronger than it was on day zero.

There are options for speeding the writing aspect up:

- Use the outlining method - it truly works - if it didn't I wouldn't do it. You can use the outlines for video as well as text and we'll cover repurposing in a few days.
- Remember good enough is good enough. Perfect will suck up a huge amount of time. Do your best and be done.
- Outsource it (this can be time consuming to find the right person, but it's worth it if you don't want to get up a fraction earlier).

Have you got feedback from your blogging activity?

Everyone's an expert about what you should and shouldn't be doing. There's only one person that matters when it comes to feedback and that's your ideal customer.

If your ideal customer is loving it, then carry on. If they're not tell us in the group and we can brainstorm a solution.

Give some feedback to others in the group, tell them what they're doing well and be encouraging. People love encouragers.

Thinking about a post to write today? Why not share some feedback from your clients with your audience. It's not you saying it, so it's not bragging. If you get really great feedback you can turn it into a case study, and these are incredibly powerful for your blog.

<http://www.sarkemedia.com/case-studies-for-your-blog/>

Any questions, ask in the [Facebook group](#). We're here to help you get the most from your blogging. There are no silly questions, just questions that we've not yet covered in these

emails.

Oh and tomorrow I'm going to share with you the reasons why you should never, ever copy the "competition".

Day 12 of the 30 day business blogging challenge.

I mentioned yesterday about why you shouldn't bother copying the competition. Aside from cooking up a batch of bad karma, you're making the big assumption that your competition have got it right, that their product and your product do the exact same thing and, that you have the same audience.

There's a guy called Jon McCulloch and one of his business books is called Grow Your Business Fast. It's a great book. I love it. In it Jon shares the story of how a businessman regularly blows 10k on advertising. Not because advertising works in his industry (because it doesn't), but so his competition go out and blow their budget too.

Yep, they blow their cold, hard cash on a method that doesn't work.

If you were observing that company, you'd be thinking right now that advertising is fantastic and they're getting great results from it. And you'd be very tempted to go out and book up all the advertising you can afford. Which is exactly what the businessman wants you to do: waste your money, so he can suck up the customers.

And I do it too. I know through my stats when someone scrapes the keyword data from my site. If it's a one-off I'll ignore it. If it happens again in the same week, I'll go on the offensive and start rapidly blogging on a related topic. You'll see me do a nice little pirouette into Kindle books, or some other marketing topic. And I'll deliberately do it to throw out a false trail to keep the copy cats on the edge of their seat.

Don't fall into the trap of copying someone else and doing what you think works for them.

When you are you, you will attract people who will like and love you.

Now, you're going to read and see articles that will encourage you to copy someone else. To "steal" someone else's work and write it with your own voice. You really don't need to do that.

You need to do this instead:

<http://www.firepolemarketing.com/blog-content-strategy/>

When you acknowledge your sources and your inspiration, you lift everyone involved.

When you are your true, authentic self you'll discover that people like you for who you are, and not because you've re-written someone else's content, used them as a muse and then flung them away with the trash.

A true artist is inspired and acknowledges the source.

Why? Because they know it's bad karma if they don't, and they know that people trust them even more when they do.

And ultimately it's about trust. You need it with your readers. If you share flawed data with your readers then you'll be the one to take the rap for it, unless you've mentioned your source.

When you credit people it's also a great way of networking and connecting with them.

They may like and share that blog post too. I make a point of actively promoting any content that mentions me. And if you search, you'll find people that have mentioned you too and you can share that :).

Day 13 of the 30 day business blogging challenge.

Can I tell you about the worst tuna sandwich in my life? It was at a Hilton hotel, and after 7 hours driving without a break, I fell into the restaurant. Well rolled, I was 8 months pregnant at the time. It was “after-hours” and for a hotel they weren’t very forthcoming with the food. I played the pregnancy card... and they made me a tuna sandwich.

The bread was an inch thick on each slice. I could smell it as they carried it to my table and it looked and smelled sublime, and my tummy growled (or maybe it was the baby) and I bit into that sandwich only to discover there’s no tuna in it.

Okay, to say no tuna was an exaggeration, there was possibly a tea spoon of tuna spread over some butter scrapings, and that was my sandwich.

Hotel food isn’t cheap, and Hilton hotel food is quite expensive so to pay £15 for a tuna sandwich that smelt like heaven, yet tasted like the bottom of a parrot’s birdcage, was disappointing to say the least.

And quality is a lot like that tuna sandwich. On the surface it had all the makings of the best tuna sandwich ever:-

- I was hungry and receptive to the sandwich; it was just what I was looking for
- Hilton is a big brand, they talk a lot about quality and the Hilton experience
- I could smell the bread and my tummy and my brain we’re going into over drive

And here I am 19 years later telling you about the worst tuna sandwich in the world.

There’s a lot of talk about quality content, and quality is a very subjective area. You see, even the most grammatically correct blog post may fall short in the quality arena. It can be all bread and no filling.

When this happens you’re disappointed, readers are disappointed and the thing is... a little tuna is easy to add. The sandwich becomes edible.

Making your content better in quality can be done in a number of ways and over the next few days we’re going to explore some of the options. Yes, you’re in the tuna sandwich section of the blogging challenge now :)

<http://www.sarkemedia.com/how-to-create-more-effective-content/>

Let me know what you think and remember to leave comments so you build links back to your site.

Day 14 of the Business Blogging 30 Day Challenge

Yesterday you got to hear all about the world's worst tuna sandwich. I got quite a few replies back about how Hilton have improved over the years :), so thank you for those.

We touched upon quality and how grammar is part of quality content. Notice I said *part* of quality content.

Quality consists of many components. Meaty filling, nice bread and a lovely garnish... but what if the plate's dirty? Eww.

And that's the thing about quality, it's very subjective. If you hadn't eaten for a week, not even the Hubble telescope would be able to see the iota you care about that plate. You'd eat the sandwich.

If English isn't your first language, or you have Dyslexia, or grammar was never covered in your English lessons (this happened in the UK in the 1980s), then you might need a little help.

[Grammarly](#) is a great place to start and they have a free trial. You can run your last few posts through [Grammarly](#) (and any up and coming ones), and catch any snafus.

I know not everyone uses WordPress so in the post there are tools that you can use with your browser :).

<https://bobwp.com/wordpress-plugins-spelling-grammar>

There's no excuses ;)

PS My best blog post ever earned a contract with an international motor company worth £2 million. Yeah, you read that correctly. The post had two typos and the grammar would've given the nearest grammar police a heart attack. The right components, in the right place at the right time will trump grammar any day of the week. I have the contract to prove it.

Day 15 of the Business Blogging 30 day Challenge

Well the grammar police hated yesterday's email.

How dare I earn money and not be grammatically perfect *yawn*.

Three people unsubscribed as I clearly don't know what I'm talking about.

What I should've said was *grammar is the most important part of a blog post*. I should have said it was more important than captivating headlines, more important than laying your content out correctly and more important than any other aspect of your content.

I don't believe that. But according to them, I should have said how marvellous grammatically correct content is. Along with I should have legitimised "stealing" other people's content as there's nothing really wrong with doing it, right?

Quality is made up of many, many factors. Don't get het up on one of the factors.

But before I talk more about quality, I want to talk a little about the controversy....

<http://www.bloggingwizard.com/blogging-controversy/>

Did you see how I manoeuvred you into the controversial post with a little email controversy? ;)

Day 16 Business Blogging 30 Day Challenge

Controversy? That was so yesterday!

Today, let's talk about trust.

Trust is another quality indicator. You've visited a lot of sites the last 15 days. You've left comments and you've seen how hard people are working on their blogging.

But you may have found some sites that you just didn't feel right about. And you trusted your intuition, and didn't comment or share.

Do you know why?

<http://www.sarkemedia.com/build-trust-through-your-blog/>

You need reassurance and one of the ways of getting that reassurance is to display your social proof. Personally, I hate this. Truly, I do. But I have the testimonials and logos of important places on the front of my website as they're trust builders. I've had them in the sidebar, but I saw them everyday, and they mocked me:

"You need us, but you don't like us"

"Oh look, here we are and you have to have us here!"

I moved them to the front of my website where I never, ever have to look at them, however, I have rotating testimonials in the sidebar. I see a different one every day and that's cool.

Your task for today is to pop some social proof into a blog post. A testimonial from a client, a place that's listed you as awesome. You might need to ask permission if the testimonial has come by email.

And if you haven't asked for any... Ask. You can blame it on me, I have big shoulders.

Simply email a few existing clients and say "I have to write a blog post and have some testimonials in it from clients. Would you mind giving me a few lines about how I've helped you / saved you money / made you money. If I don't have these in a blog post Sarah Arrow will be sitting on my doorstep making even more unreasonable demands".

Feel free to paraphrase that however you like :)

Remember to share your post in the Facebook group. The group is an open group so feel free to leave encouraging comments for the other participants too. Comments increase your visibility :)

PS you're over the half way mark now. You CAN do it. Just imagine how big your writing muscle now is!

PPS Want to see one of my testimonials for this blogging challenge? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwSqo8lnh8> I'd love it if you would share the video :)

Day 17 of the Business Blogging 30 Day Challenge

Images can make or break a post. With the steady increase of image sharing sites, you're missing a blog post promoting trick by not great images in your blog post.

Where do you get great images?

Well, let me tell you now, Google Images is not a sweetie jar to raid every time you need a new pic. Images that you create and own are the best to have in your post as you're not violating anyone else's copyright.

Let's talk about copyright violation for the moment... You can have your photo taken by someone and you do not own the copyright. You may be in the image, but you do not own that image. You have to use it with permission, preferably written, so no one can argue.

If you take a photo of a celebrity, you own that image, not the celebrity. So it works in your favour too.

So what do you do if you want topical images? You have three options:

1. Take your own photo
2. Buy an image
3. Use a site like <http://photopin.com/>

I have subscriptions to image sites and I buy image packs all of the time. The fines for copyright violation start at £3,000 per image. And ignorance is no defense in the eyes of the law. If you value your business then you need to consider where you need to invest in your images.

Today's post is about finding and using images:

<http://www.sarkemedia.com/choose-right-images-content/>

This post contains 20 different places you can get Royalty Free images from.

Your task is to create an image using [Canva](#) and insert it into your blog post. Make your call to action on your post "if you like this post please pin it to your xxx pinboard".

Change xxx to the topic the blog post is about.

Which reminds me: calls to action. We'll cover them in tomorrow's email.

PS [graphicstock](#) run a 83% off deal which means you can download unlimited graphics for a year for approx £60/\$99. They have a 7 day trial you might want to check out to see if the images suit you. This is the best budget option that I can find.

Day 18 Business Blogging 30 Day Challenge

The first time I gave my dog a mustard sandwich I was cringing inside. I'd been reassured that I wouldn't hurt her, and that she'd learn her lesson and all would be good. But I still didn't want her to have it.

I made the sandwich and then I popped it on the empty kitchen counter. I didn't have to wait long, within minutes, my dog was up the counter stealing the mustard sandwich. And she ate it in two bites. Maybe even one and half bites, it was so quickly eaten I'm not entirely convinced I didn't imagine it.

Well, it wasn't enough to teach my dog not to steal food. I've come to terms with the fact that as she's half Labrador that means her tummy is only marginally denser than a black hole, and sucks everything into it.

I've tried everything to stop her stealing, well, everything except electrifying the food, that's just a step too far.

No one likes someone who steals.

The thief feels guilty; like a fraud. And the victim? Well, they feel a whole range of emotions.

You'll see a lot of blogger's talk about *legally* stealing anything from Keywords to Inspiration. Oh please! It's still stealing and when you do this you have to be sure of many things, least of all that you're stealing something that works!

What if you riffed instead?

Not only is it great Karma, you'll make a completely new piece of content instead.

<http://www.firepolemarketing.com/blog-content-strategy/>

Go take a look at the post, and then create your own riff. If you've been active in the Facebook group, find someone whose content has inspired you and then write a little about what they do and how it relates to you, link to them, add an extract and then close the post.

If someone links to you, go and share the post with your audience.

If you do this, you've not only riffed off of someone else's content, you'll have increased your reach, and that's something stealing never does.

Day 18 Business Blogging 30 Day Challenge



<http://www.sarkemedia.com/calls-to-action-for-your-content/>**Each type of blog post requires a different call to action.**

- The very least you should ask for in your call to action is a social share.

If a call to action feels too much like selling, then definitely ask for the social share.

If you're struggling with calls to action post up in the Facebook group and if we get 10 people interested then we'll do a quick webinar in 30 minutes (no fluff, no sales pitches, all content) one evening. Just let me know (it's that important to get these right). A good call to action will earn you more readers, subscribers and cash. However the wrong call to action will leave you feeling like the guy in photo above. Your challenge for today is to edit your existing content and improve your calls to action. Share with the Facebook group your very best call to action :) I've procrastinated about this email, it's one that I should have written days ago, but for some reason I got into a funk

about it, and in a few emails time we'll look at overcoming
blogger's block, as it will hit all of us at some point.

Day 20 Business Blogging 30 Day Challenge

Not got time to post? I totally get that, here we are on day 20 and your blog will be gaining momentum. Traffic will be growing, and community will slowly be taking shape around it.

And you're terrified about taking your foot off of the accelerator, as you don't want to lose what you've gained already and you don't have the budget to hire in a ghost blogger.... What can you do?

Meet Content CurationContent Curation isn't too dissimilar to what we covered in the blog post round up email, nearly two weeks ago.**There are two steps in the process of content curation.**

The first is to find great content that your audience will love. You can do that through feeds, alerts and other tools.

The second step is to present the content. There are many different places where you can share content with your readers.

You can find more on content curation best practice here: <http://www.sarkemedia.com/content-curation-7-best-practice-tips/>

1. Your BlogCurating content on your blog expands your audience, gives it SEO power, and helps you keep posting fresh content when you're low on ideas. When you've been doing a blog for a while, it's easy to run out of gas.

Curating content for your blog helps you create original posts that your audience is interested in. One advantage is that you don't have to be an expert on a topic to find articles on that topic and comment on them.

2. Facebook Fan PagesFacebook Fan Pages offer an even more "social" place to publish curated content. But they also offer up sources of content for you to include in your curated post.
3. InfographicsInfographics are really nothing more than curated content presented in a graphic form. You take content from various sources and create a graphic that presents this content to your readers so that they can take it in at a glance. Infographics are especially good for taking complex ideas and breaking them down into a more easily digestible form. A quick search for your topic and the word "infographic" will give you list of infographics you can "legally" republish on your blog. Remember to link to the source of the infographic.
4. Social Curating SitesSites like List.ly and Pinterest are social media networks designed for curating content. These are wonderful because they allow you to find and publish content in one place, as well as interact with other users. Look for sites that are loaded with features that help you customize your content curation.No matter where you publish, always remember to add something of your own to the curated content. Just sharing a link on Twitter isn't content curation; neither is copying and pasting sections of someone else's article to your blog, even if you give them attribution.

Try using your curated content as the basis for explaining your opinions, giving insights on a new topic, or exploring the opinions of others.

Your challenge today is to curate a post, time yourself and see how fast it is.

PS If you picked up [this software](#) several emails ago, you'll be able to do this challenge in less than 10 minutes

Day 21 Business Blogging 30 Day Challenge

Put the kettle on, and sit back with a cuppa. Today's email is one packed with useful information, and right at the end of the email you'll find out how to get a fr*e gift for completing today's challenge.

Yesterday I mentioned infographics as a way to curate content and have something to post when you haven't much time. And there was a flurry of questions about infographics, so let's unpack infographics and how they can work for you as a blogger.

When you create an infographic it's a powerful tool to send you back traffic. It will get shared on Pinterest ([one of mine has been repinned over 10,000 times](#)), curated by other bloggers and generate you inbound links, what's not to love?

Let's be honest here and admit that most people are not talented when it comes to graphic design. It's a specialized field that requires a great degree of talent and practice. Infographics utilize elements of graphic design so if you're creating one from scratch, without the use of templates or software, you'd probably need to be highly skilled.

Yet, there are templates and software products that you can use which eliminate the need for a graphic designer. In fact, many of these step by step products and templates are created by highly skilled graphic designers. All you need to do is plan your infographic and follow the wizard tool for your chosen software.

If you can plan your information and follow directions, you can easily create infographics using free tools online. That's where we'll begin.

Let's take a look at the seven most popular free online infographic tools.

We'll break down the pros and cons of each product and highlight the features.

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Part 1 – Top Free Infographic Creation Tools There are dozens of great infographic creation tools. The functions and features vary from tool to tool. For example, some infographic tools provide you with templates while others let you create your graphic from scratch. Some tools are focused on a single function while others are broader in nature. The following is a list of the top free infographic creation tools as well as a breakdown of the pros and cons for each tool. 1.

Visual.ly Site: www.visual.ly Visual.ly is a fantastic tool that allows you to accomplish many tasks. Using their directory you can share your infographic. You can also use the site to find, and embed, other relevant infographics onto your blog or social media page.

Additionally, you can use Visual.ly to create your own infographics. It takes less than three minutes to accomplish using their handy tool. Additionally, using the creation tool is about as easy as clicking a button.

All you have to do is:- 1 Register at Visual.ly (registration is free).- 2 Click on Create, or visit <http://create.visual.ly/>, and begin creating your infographic. There are only a handful of infographicsthat you can choose from and each of them relates to your social media interactions and reputation. That's the downside of Visual.ly; it's limited to information that they can automatically find and calculate using their applications.

There are presently about 15 different types of infographics you can create. They range from the Life of a Hashtag to an exploration of your Facebook Brand page. You simply enter the details for your social media site, allow Visual.ly access to your information and let it create the graphic for you. It takes less than 60 seconds to create your graphic when you can then download and/or embed.

The Pros – Visual.ly is a quick and easy tool to use and it provides a number of other useful functions including the ability to embed other relevant infographics. It's also a good research tool to identify what makes a good infographic.

You also have the ability to sign up for a free infographic template, you can explore the marketplace to find ideas or use the system to get matched with a graphic designer.

The Cons – As far as free tools go, you can only create a narrow range of infographic topics and they're limited to your website or social media presence.

2. Piktochart Site: <http://piktochart.com> With Piktochart, you get to create an innovative Infographic using a combination of different types of visualizations which include: themes, icons, vectors, images and a chart exporter. You'll enjoy a broad range of color schemes, shapes, and fonts. It's a super easy tool to use with a shallow learning curve. If you can click, drag, and drop, then you can create an infographic with Piktochart.

Drag-and-drop and click your way through color schemes, shapes and fonts. Once your image has been created you can then export or embed the infographic to your website.

Piktochart has more than 300,000 users and more than 100 included themes. You'll likely be able to find several themes that are relevant to your infographic goals and to your niche. The Pros – Piktochart is easy to use and there are more than 100 themes to choose from.

The Cons – It's only free for the first month. After that, it's \$29 a month, although you may find that the results you get frominfographics make \$29 look like a fantastic investment.

3. Infogr.am Site: <http://infogr.am> Infogr.am is free, and it's one of the most popular free online tools available. It's been used to create more than 800,000 infographics. There are a wide variety of options with Infogr.am including:• The ability to make more than 30 different types of charts. • The ability to download files in PNG or PDF format. • The ability to publish your infographic online, including the ability to embed it, which makes it sharable. • You can also password protect your data and create a private link. The Pros – It's a quick and easy tool to create visually friendlyinfographics and charts. It's free and the developers are actively working to add features and functionality. The Cons – It's still

limited when it comes to adding icons and shapes to your infographic. The templates are also a bit limited. **4. Google Chart**

ToolsSite: <https://developers.google.com/chart/> Google Chart Tools is powerful, simple to use, and like all Google Applications, it's free. You can choose from a variety of charts which you can then customize and configure to display the information in a cohesive and visually pleasing way.

Additionally, because it's Google your data is gathered in real time and Google Developers are always on the job and working to improve their applications.

The Pros – It's free and there are a seemingly infinite number of charts and customizable options. Google makes the interface intuitive and easy to add to your website or blog.

The Cons – It's limited to charts. Not all infographics are charts; many are simply a varied collection of images and text that flow seamlessly together. **5. Wordle**

Site: <http://www.wordle.net/> Be careful with Wordle, it's addictive. You may find yourself creating dozens of these fun word clouds. A word cloud is a visually appealing collection of words. Ideally, you'd choose words related to your business like "Innovator," and then let Wordle get to work. You provide the text and choose a theme, and then Wordle creates an automatically generated word cloud.

You can then customize the image by choosing different fonts, layouts, and color schemes. You can then save the image to the Wordle gallery, share, and post on your blog. Wordle is free and it takes less than thirty seconds to create an image.

The Pros – You can create an infographic in about thirty seconds. It's super easy to do and to embed onto your website or blog. The Cons – It's limited to Word Clouds. **6.**

PixlrSite: <http://pixlr.com/> Pixlr is an online photo editor. You can upload images from your computer, from the Internet, or from an image library. It works like many other photo editors. You can add text, you can also use the Pixlr-o-matic to take photos of yourself with your computer's webcam and to add graphic elements to that photo.

The Pros – A simple editor that's free and easy to use. You can add a quote to a photo in a matter of seconds and have an image that's ready to Pin, post, and share.

The Cons – It's a photo editor, which means that it has a learning curve. Adding text to a photo is one thing, but creating a full scale infographic is another. It may take some time to become a pro with this tool. **7. Easel.ly**Site: <http://www.easel.ly/> This free web-based infographic tool offers you a dozen free templates which they call "vhemes" or visual themes. Each vHEME is customizable. You can create an infographic using their collection of shapes, arrows and lines, fonts, and colors.

And unlike many free online infographic tools, Easel.ly lets you upload your own component graphics and position them onto your infographic. This tool is one of the most comprehensive and easy to use infographic tools available. It uses a simple drag and drop process. However, it's a drag and drop process that you guide, and there isn't a wizard tool to walk you through the steps.

The Pros – Easel.ly is easy to use. What's easier than drag and drop? The Cons –

Easel.ly is currently in beta.

So there we have it! 5 good tools to create infographics.

These are not quick and easy to create, but have a go and see what you come up with.

If you create your own infographic, please tag me as I have an extra special reward for you - a copy of my Zero to Infographics guide currently selling for £7.99, as your reward. Remember, it's your own infographic with your branding / name and information on it.

PS It's not as hard as you might think, you can buy and edit Infographic template with some very user friendly software. Here's where I get mine - [Infographic Templates](#)

Day 22 Business Blogging 30 Day Challenge

How To Generate Traffic Using Linky Party A very simple, free but effective means of increasing your blog traffic and creating more backlinks is through a linky party.

You can find linky parties through hashtags like

#linky

#linkyparty

#linkup

Or searching your niche + Linky via Google.

What is a linkup Whether you call it a “linky tool”, a “linky”, a blog party, a grid or a blog hop, the linkup is a very efficient way to connect with your readers. It is an active social blogging event that brings bloggers together. The way linkups work allows you, the blogger that runs the linkup, to create a different kind of relationship with your readers. What usually happens is that the blog reader acts as a content consumer. They visit, they read and leave. There are some occasions when they may leave a comment here and there but that is all. As soon as the blog post is read, it is discarded and the reader just waits passively for your next post to repeat the process. What needs to be done is to engage the reader and make them feel this is their blog too; that there is something they own in this blog post. This will turn them into a more loyal, active reader and a contributor to your blogging success. This is where the linkup comes in: How it works The InLinkz linkup tool will let you create a widget within your blog post, that allows your readers to add their own links to your linkup. This produces a colorful gallery that is built by your readers with their own posts:- See more at: <http://blog.inlinkz.com/how-to-throw-a-successful-blog-party/#sthash.xLDTMiFh.dpuf>

This isn't one of my posts, but it will show you everything you need to know about link parties, and how to have one on your blog to bring you traffic.

This is something that will bring you a lot of traffic if you do them on a monthly / weekly basis. Yes, they take time, but you will reap the rewards!

Take a step into the linky world for increased traffic.

I've started to run a linky on Tuesday for business tips. If you have a post with tips in, please stop by and submit your link <http://www.sarkemedia.com/category/linky/>

Day 23 Business Blogging 30 Day Challenge

Blogger's block... If you ask me, it's worse than writer's block.

Time has strengthened my resistance to it, and I can slay the dragon 99 times out of every 100 attempts, but there's still the one time it gets past my discipline, past my strategies and leaves me lost for words.

One of the reasons I prefer to batch write my content is so that I can power through blogger's block and still have a steady, consistent stream of content.

So, let's look at how you can power through blogger's block.

1. Stop Writing. The brain can be really contrary at times and when you don't want to do something and think about something else, then the words will magically appear in your mind.

2. Use your editorial calendar. There's a reason why the first email in this series is blogging prompts and the 4th one in the series is the editorial calendar. These powerful tools help keep you on track.

3. Stop researching. Research can be a form of procrastination. So stop it. Go and share mindless memes on Facebook for 20 minutes, you'll soon be able to create the content that you want :)

4. Use your outlines. If you recall from our first week I share about outlining your posts. These outlines can become video scripts, ideas for curated posts and the base for audio posts. When you outline you enable yourself to create stronger content, faster.

5. Read something that's not work / blogging related. Read something for fun. There's a magazine called Take a Break here, I use that. 5 minutes of reading how "my sister ran off with my best friend's dog and now they're happy and I'm getting paid to tell you about it" and I'm all raring to go again. Its poles apart from my usual read and it kick starts me writing (and no, you'll never

see a post from me titled “10 things I learned when my sister ran off with my best friend’s dog” although I can only imagine how many clicks that headline would get).

I’m pretty sure you have your own techniques for overcoming a block in your business.

Your challenge today is to write about how you overcome blocks in your niche. Remember to post up in the Facebook group so we can like, share and comment.

Day 24 Business Blogging 30 Day Challenge

You've achieved so much in the challenge so far:

- Optimised your posts
- Tailored your headlines
- Learned to riff not steal
- Curated, and created a weekly round-up
- Discovered why case studies are essential for your business blog
- Revamped your about page

In today's email we're going to look at another thing you need to consider...

Are you mobile responsive?

Does your site look good on a mobile device, including a tablet and a smartphone?

As well as looking good, you need to take a look at the sharing buttons - are they mobile responsive too? Do they even work on a mobile device?

And the sliders and headers? How do they all look on a mobile?

Now try and leave a comment from a mobile device on your website. Does your commenting system work on mobile?

Given that 87% of social sites are now accessed via a mobile device it won't be long before websites that aren't mobile responsive, well... they're going to be in a lot of trouble.

The plus side of a mobile responsive site is how much better it does in local searches. Today's task (aside from finding out if people on mobile devices can read you) is to optimise a blog post for local search. This will mean using your location as a keyword.

Post it in the group when you've done it :)

Day 25 Business Blogging 30 Day Challenge

Did you know you're now 5/6th of the way through the challenge? Well done for sticking with it, for getting back up when you've fell over and getting your content out there.

A few emails back we looked at your about page and gave it a bit of a revamp. Today we'll put your contact page under the microscope.

Are you contactable?

Today we visit Eunice Flynn, you may have seen her in the group :)

<http://www.euniceflynn.co.uk/contactable/>

Why should you leave a comment here? Well, everyone gets these emails, they hop on over to the post and they read the advice and then they look at the comments. Some smart people, and I know that's you, will leave a comment and be seen by all the people that come afterwards.

Comments are a powerful way of increasing your visibility, which is why I actively encourage you to comment on posts and comment in the Facebook group. And in a few days' time we'll look at comments in a bit more detail.

Check the post out and then share your contact page in the group

PS You should have 3 badges by now as well. A 7 day, a 14 day and a 21 day badge. Well done on getting this far, and if things haven't quite gone as you've planned, get back up, dust yourself off and start again.

Day 26 Business Blogging 30 Day Challenge

The power of comments.

You may have noticed that throughout this 30 day blogging challenge I've encouraged you to comment on the blog posts, on other people's blog posts and in the Facebook group.

Why?

<http://botanicallinguist.com/?p=1216>

Go and leave your comments on the post

PS When people wonder why they don't get comments on their blog, they need to remember they need to give them out first!

You can check out [Comment Luv](#) and see if it will grow your comments and add value to your blog [here](#)

Day 27 Business Blogging 30 Day Challenge

A list post is one of those posts that you need have on your blog. It's a post that's an ordered list of things that are really useful to your reader. As a writer they're usually fast to write as they have an easy outline or structure to follow.

In this list post I'm going to share with you the 5 secrets that will take your list post from good to great so that you get the traffic and the traction you want. I'll take it for granted that you know how to write a list post, you just want to give it some extra polish to make it really awesome.

<http://www.sarkemedia.com/great-list-post/>

Want to create an epic list post? Then check out this mini-course on how to put together an attention grabbing list post. <http://www.sarkemedia.com/epic-list-post-success/>

Day 28 Business Blogging 30 Day Challenge

It's day 28, can you believe you've nearly done it!

Let's discuss selling on your blog...

Some bloggers grab their readers by the throat and shout their promotional message into their faces. Yes it's a tried and tested technique for astonishing headlines that get clicked, but it can be painful to read if we are not the intended audience. This is day three of the blogging income booster series, and we're covering selling on your blog.

Others (like me) focus on building a relationship where they can make relevant offers, indirectly, as part of the relationship.

<http://www.sarkemedia.com/selling-on-your-blog/>

Leave me a comment and let me know your approach

Day 29 Business Blogging 30 Day Challenge

Day 29 and I get to use the word penultimate for the first time in my life ;), tomorrow I may get to use “zenith” in the title.

Whilst chatting with a coaching client the other day, the topic of blog post conversion came up. She felt that her posts should be converting better and despite the wisdom and advice I was sharing, she felt there had to be a magic plugin that would make her blog posts convert into more sales.

There is no magic plugin, it's down to you. It's down to what you write. It's down to what information you share, the words that you use.

You've got 29 blog posts posted consecutively, or as near as possible. It's time to look at conversion

<http://www.sarkemedia.com/3-reasons-why-your-blog-posts-are-not-converting-blogging/>

Day 30 Business Blogging 30 Day Challenge

Woo-hoo! You made it.

But it's not over yet. Nope, we still have today's post. If you haven't got something lined up already, will you review this 30 day challenge?

Reviews are not only great for building trust, but they also attract in other items for review. If you're blogging for business reviewing business tool and business books make you a go-to resource, even if the content is written by someone else.

I frequently review other blogger's books and tools, there's plenty enough work for all of us (I have an abundant mindset) and one day they might review something for me.

<http://www.sarkemedia.com/product-reviews-that-are-remarkable/>

When you write your review, remember to back it up with facts and stats, quote some experts (me?) and then tag me in the group so that I can share the post.

When I get 10 reviews, I'll create a list post about them and share them on my blog, sending traffic right back at you! What more can you ask?

As you're reading the Kindle version would you leave me a review? Pick your favourite section of the book and write about that, and then post it to Amazon.

Thank you. It means a lot to me.

PS It seems that I can't work the word "zenith" into this email after all *sob*.

PPS what happens now?

In the next few days I'm going to email you the details of two different email courses one is about traffic and the other is about conversion. Be ready for that email when it comes in, go over your stats and work out which one you need. You won't get these emails unless you subscribe for the challenge itself, so message me if you'd like to see them – sarah@sarkemedia.com and ask me to add you in at day 30.

I'll also email you more blogging tips, about twice a week, again if you're not subscribed you're going to miss out on these too. Feel free to continue to post your content in the group and like and comment, it increases your visibility tremendously.

PPPS

I hope you feel that you've got great value from this 30 day blogging challenge, and I'd love for you to share your success stories with me. A blog coach is as only as great as the results she gets

