The Ideal Guide to Creating Your Own *Profitable* Website or Blog From Scratch!

Easily Create A Website or Blog That Gets Traffic & Makes Money But Won't Cost You A Fortune In The Process

Plus

Step-by-Step Wordpress.org Installation Guide

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http://www.homenotion.com/

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Part I

Welcome!

Are you excited to create a website but have no idea how to begin? Well you are in the right place!

This guide and tutorial will walk you through not only how to create your website, or blog from scratch, but I'll show you how to promote it and begin making money with it.

One of the great things about creating a website today is you don't have to be a programmer or know HTML, however as you move along in your knowledge of creating sites the more you will learn and the more you learn the better you will become and that means more earning potential.

This guide is designed to help you create the best site you can the easiest way possible, however I also want you to take your time and carefully think about what your site will be about and what your visitors might expect from it.

Never rush into creating your site without careful consideration and planning first. When your site is completed you'll want it to be interesting, sales worthy and one that the search engines will love.

... Just a few words of caution

Over the past few years the internet has become a popular gathering place for folks hoping to make a fortune online. Is it possible? *Yes.* Does it happen for most people? *No.*

The internet is not a get rich quick method for making money. If you're looking for that you'll be disappointed and beware of the marketer that promises instant riches with little work, those are the people trying to sell you something ;-)

I've managed to make a pretty good income online, I love what I do and I hope I never have to return to the 9-5 grind ever again. I love the freedom I have from working at home. But make no mistake, it took effort, commitment, patience and I've made *lots* of mistakes in the process. Hopefully I can help you avoid those same mistakes.

If you are someone that isn't afraid to work hard, who enjoys learning, isn't afraid to spend a little cash (*it's not much*) and is realistic enough to know that success doesn't come overnight, then your future looks promising already ;-)

Of course I can't guarantee your success, I can't even be sure you will read this guide or do anything with it, but I do know that with the right attitude, a strong vision for your future and the willingness to stick with it, you're chances are better than most.

What Skills Do I Need?

Anyone is capable of starting a business online, I think you've probably seen evidence of that.

Many people start out with no skills whatsoever and for the most part you don't need any real skill but there are a few things you should be able to do to help boost your success.

Ability to Follow Simple Directions

So often people don't take the time to read and follow instructions. They get anxious and jump the gun. Don't be one of those people. Take your time, read instructions carefully and think about what you are doing. if you need help or don't understand something, don't panic, simply try to research it more or *ask for help.*

Good Writing Skills

I won't lie to you,you're going to need decent writing skills.

This doesn't mean you have to be some great author or expert writer, *not at all,* in fact writing for the web is much easier than for other business writing, *that's one of the things I love about it.*

Writing for the web demands a casual and personal style. Learn to write conversationally as if you are speaking one-on-one with a friend.

But it's also about writing less. Long wordy dissertations won't keep your site visitors interested. Web surfers typically skim what they read so you're going to have get to the point *quickly.*

Write paragraphs that are no more than 2-3 sentences, 4 at the most. Each sentence should make its point quickly and not waste your readers time with wordy phrases that have little meaning.

Of course good spelling and grammar are a must and you should continually proofread your work

for correct spelling, grammar and logic flow.

Ken Evoy puts out an excellent *free* guide titled 'http://myws.sitesell.com/adlite.html'. There's a ton of good information in it for helping you craft your words and write content that will keep your reader's interested and keep them coming back to your website.

Learn To Think 'Creatively'

Build your website with creativity in mind. After all, your website is your storefront. Walking into a store that has color, warmth and looks inviting is so much better than a store that is dull, boring and has no personality.

Think about what colors you want your site to have, and choose color combinations that are pleasing to the eye and the look professional. Here's a site I like for helping me come up with color combinations that complement one another:

http://www.webdevelopersnotes.com/design/color_combinations.php3

Give spirit and character to your site. Don't be unprofessional but don't be afraid to give your site personality and a unique flair. You want it to stand out *above* the the rest, not blend with the crowd.

Stay Focused and Stick With It

A problem for many internet business owners is they tend to lose focus. Train yourself to keep your eye on the ball at all times and don't let distractions get in the way of completing your daily tasks.

Each day make a plan of action and stick to your plan. If you find yourself reading email several times a day because you're on a lot of email lists, get off them. Constant sales distractions and lures from marketers will not only waste your time but can confuse your direction.

But this is very important - don't *ever* allow yourself to abandon what you are doing because you're not making money fast enough. Stick with what you are doing until it becomes profitable. Jumping from one thing to another is a sure path to frustration and failure.

Enough lecture ...let's get started creating your website...

Choosing a Domain Name

In order to have a website you need a domain name and domain names are purchased from a domain registrar.

When deciding on a domain name for your site you want to find a name that contains words that are closely related to what your site is about.

My first mistake with 'Homenotion' was the word isn't something people would search on to find my site which is about 'building an internet home business'. A better name would have been internethomebusiness.com or something similar.

In other words your domain name should contain words that *best describe* your site. A site about growing roses for example, would have a domain name like 'growingroses.com', 'fungrowingroses.com' or 'growingrosesathome.com'.

Hyphenated or non-hyphenated?

The truth is - it doesn't matter. Both hyphenated and non-hyphenated work equally as well. If you're having trouble deciding then purchase both names and point your website to both places.

A good rule of thumb is use hyphens if you have more than **three words** in your domain name.

For example, windowblinds.com is certainly acceptable and easy to read, however fauxfinishwindowblinds.com would be better distinguished if you used faux-finish-window-blinds.com. The search engines pick up either one for keyword content, so considering readability is why you might use the dashes.

Regulatory standards require that a domain name can be as long as 67 characters, including the characters in the suffix (63 characters plus the 3 character suffix).

Only letters, numbers, or hyphens are permitted. A domain name may not begin or end with a hyphen. Keep your domain name as short as you can, using all 63 characters gets too large and makes it hard for readability and for your users to remember.

One thing you'll find out is that your first choice in a domain name probably won't be available, but don't get hung up on finding the *perfect* domain name, your domain name will not make or break how well your site does in the search engines, but it helps to have a name that contains keywords people will use to find your site.

Domain Extension

The best and most common domain name extensions are .com, .org, .net, .biz. Most people prefer a '.com' suffix but that won't make a difference in how successful your website is.

If you can't find a .com domain name that you like, using a .org or .net will work just as good. The search engines and your visitors will be focused on your content, not the extension of your domain.

There are literally hundreds of domain registrars where you can purchase your domain name. I use and like Godaddy simply because they are a highly secure site. They also have a handy domain name finder that helps with choosing a name.

As for cost, most domain name services run about the same in price, it's roughly $10 a year for one domain name. If you can, get in on sales and specials which most registrars offer from time to time.

Keeping your domain name private or public

When you register your domain name you have the option of keeping your domain name private or public.

A private domain registration will keep your information (name, email address, etc.) out of the global Internet database, and will prevent most spam from reaching your email in box. If you register you name as private, anyone doing a 'WHOIS' on your domain name will not have access to your personal information. Even though registering a "private" domain is not mandatory, it's a good idea.

If you're trying to keep costs down you can start out as public and move to private later on.

Web Site Hosting

If you don't already have a hosting service you will need to subscribe to a monthly hosting service as well – but hosting is cheap and for that reason there are also lots of services competing for your business.

As tempting as it may be, resist free hosting. Your website will be your income lifeline and free hosting services have several shortcomings like limited web page space and email service, if they offer any at all.

They also may place ads on your website and if they offer free email service the will place the ads there as well. Ads like that can be annoying and distracting to visitors. Free services are also notorious for unreliable service, you don't want to risk hours of downtime. But the biggest disadvantage is that many search engines ignore them.

I've used several hosting services, both free and paid, during my internet career and a few of them aren't even in business anymore. After long bouts of down time and poor response support I'd had enough, it wasn't worth it.

I finally settled on Hostgator. For $7.95 a month they have adequate disk space for all my websites. They have Cpanel & Fantastico, unlimited email servers and many more features and benefits too numerous to mention but the best benefit is their 24 hour responsive support. That's not a feature you can afford to do without and they don't charge you an arm and a leg for it either.

Whatever hosting service you settle on, be sure they have the 'Cpanel' Administrator and 'Fantastico' application. Cpanel is a hosting control panel that provides a graphical user interface and automation tools designed to simplify the use of your hosting service. It makes what use to be complicated much easier.

The 'Fantastico' feature is what will make it super easy to install applications like blogs, forums and other add-ons to your website.

If you like Hostgator, here's a link and coupon code for your first month of hosting *for only a penny.*

http://homenotion.com/blog/web-hosting/hostgator-coupon-code-first-month-is-free/

Creating Your Website

Before actually creating your website please, *please* make a plan first. If you don't, your going to get stuck in the process.

For example, plan out what your site will be about, i.e. your topics and categories, content, keywords, color scheme, etc., you'll have a much easier time putting it all together later on.

I've made the mistake in the past of not thinking my sites through and every time it snags me with wasted time forcing me to go back and rethink things.

Follow my guidelines and work through each step carefully and you'll do just fine ;-)

Keyword Research

Everything starts with keyword research. Building your website, writing content, your salescopy, search engine optimization – it all starts with choosing your keywords carefully. By choosing the right keywords I mean finding the keywords that are the least competitive but are the words and phrases web surfers use to find what it is they are looking for.

For example, if you choose a keyword phrase such as 'natural soap for hands' that may seem like an accurate keyword phrase but if I research it I can see it gets only about 28 searches a day. The phrase 'natural hand soap' on the other hand gets about 150 a day, you're going to want to use the latter. It will make a difference in your traffic to that page.

So before creating your website start thinking about your keywords, That means finding relevant, targeted keywords, not only your home page but for each page of your site.

In fact I suggest that even before purchasing your domain name you first determine the keywords that best describe your site's overall topic. I've found that doing my keyword research *first* helps with finding a domain name that more accurately describes what my site is about.

Using a good keyword tool will be your best friend. There are several free keyword research tools to help you out. Google's free keyword research tool is a good start. For boosting my competitive edge I use Wordtracker. It's a fee based tool but they have a free trial and some very useful training that will help you understand how to effectively find and use your keywords.

Remember to...

- Look for keywords that best describes each page of your site yet are the keywords most used by web surfers to find that specific information.

- Don't focus on the broader keywords for your page descriptions, instead focus on using the long tail keywords for all your site pages.

- Use long tail keyword word phrases, which are the more narrowly descriptive keyword phrases. 'red shoes' is a basic keyword phrase, 'red dancing shoes' or 'red running shoes' is a long tail key phrase.

The more focused and precise your keywords, the more targeted your traffic which is precisely what you want.

WebSite Structure

Your site's structure will help you develop a site that flows logically, is easy for visitors to navigate and the search engines will love.

Here's the most common website structure:

· a left column that includes a site categories menu
· a right column that features miscellaneous content or advertising
· a main panel in the middle for the body copy
· a header panel that often includes an attractive or eye catching graphic
· a page footer that has links to basic pages like a site map, terms of use, about me, etc.

Use your keyword research tools to help you determine what categories your site will offer. For example, keyword research on the topic of 'dog training' turned up things like:

- dog training tips
- dog training aids
- dog training schools
- dog training tricks
- dog training books
- dog training for kids
- dog training leashes

These are all categories that would be perfect for a dog training site.

Create a site map - Site maps are like a table of contents. Site maps can help search engines

find, crawl and index all the pages in a website ensuring that no page is left behind. A good site builder will include a site map creator for you.

Include a Privacy Policy – If your site will be collecting information such as name and email, be sure to include a privacy policy page that assures your viewers you will not be selling or using their information other than for your own purposes. Your viewers like to know that you are in keeping with privacy policies.

Create an 'About Me' Page – Let your viewers know about who you are and what you are about. The more personal you are the more secure your viewers feel about accepting what you have to say and feel more at ease about what you have to offer.

Web Site Navigation

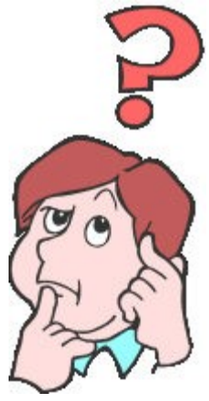
Your site's navigation needs to flow logically and makes it easy for your visitors to find the information they are looking for. This is also critical for helping your site rank well in the search engines.

Create sub directories for your pages and file them where they make the most sense.
For example, if you have several pages for 'Dutch oven recipes' file them in a subcategory for recipes:

/recipes/nacho-dip.html
/recipes/chili.html
/recipes/beefstew.html

It's also good practice to keep your content limited to 3 levels deep. That means developing a structure that takes no more than 3 links to get to the deepest content. The shorter the path a search engine has to take to get to an internal page, the better.

Blog vs. Traditional Website



Which is better?

One of the things you'll hear a lot about is **Web 2.0 technology.**

All that means is the web technology and website design that uses content sharing, communication and social networking,

With the advent of Web 2.0, people have preferred creating blogs because they offer the social interaction and networking, which explains why they have become so popular. They naturally provide and encourage commenting (which adds content) and they make network marketing very easy.

So are blogs better than traditional websites? I think it depends on who you ask. I don't think they are *better*, they are just used differently.

Some people will tell you that blogs rank better than regular sites, I've *not* found that to be true.

The search engines appreciate sites that are socially compatible, they even tend to index a blog faster, however that does not guarantee overall success or high search engine rankings. What helps your site do well is the relevant content it contains, how well it provides your visitors with what they want, your linking strategies and how well you promote it.

Blogs do use web 2.0 technology but traditional website software can incorporate that technology too, in fact many traditional website builders are now including web 2.0 features into their software as well.

Whatever website you choose to create or the software you use to create it is ultimately up to you, my goal is really more about giving you enough information so you can effectively make your own informed decisions. Choosing a traditional website or a blog is about using what you are most comfortable with and find the easiest to use.

I use both traditional site building software and blogs, and both of them do very well on the web.

Creating A Traditional Website

If you're a techie, you can build your sites from scratch using HTML, but I'm not sure why anyone would want to do that. There are so many easier ways.

If you're semi-techie, DreamWeaver by Adobe, is an industry leader in site building. I own Dreamweaver but I have not used it to build a site because of its steep learning curve, and I'll confess, I've never taken the time or had the patience to actually learn it, *maybe some day :-|*

I use Xsitepro as my traditional website builder and Wordpress for my blogs.

Here's a little more about those tools:

XsitePro is a favorite site builder of mine, it's the most closely related to Dreamweaver *without* the learning curve. I was able to easily create websites the first day I got it. It's what I've created my Homenotion site with among a few others and I *still* use it today to create new websites.

Even though XsitePro comes with an outstanding tutorial, it's one of those applications that you can thumb your way through without sifting through all the tutorial basics. *It makes it easy to get started quickly.* But it's also robust.

Xsitepro & Web 2.0: If you already use Xsitepro or are considering it but want web 2.0 capabilities, there is a excellent product that will integrate Wordpress features into your Xsitepro website. *Pretty cool!* Here's where to find out more about Xsitepro to Wordpress integration.

Nervous About Creating Your First Website?

If you have never built a website before and are a little more than overwhelmed by it, a great site builder for first time site creators is Sitebuildit!

This is an *all-in-one* package that includes *everything* you need to build your site from scratch. It will register your domain name, provide your web hosting without you having to find a host yourself and the most important part to all is you get ***training.***

Most site builders will give you the training for how to use their software but they don't give you the fundamentals of what it takes to actually create a successful website or internet business for that matter.

SiteBuildit includes training on how to find keywords, how to create the best content, how to optimize your site and keywords, how to start a newsletter or create an email list, how to promote your site and much more.

The tools included are the best anywhere. The cost of this application is more, naturally, but the tools and training you get would cost you a *lot* more if you were to purchase them on your own using other resources.

Sitebuildit's latest 2.0 release includes the web 2.0 social integration within their software. Something I was *very* excited to see :-)

If you've never created a website before and the techie stuff is more than you think you can handle, Sitebuildit will save you a lot of the anxiety and stress of getting started.

Creating a Blog

Creating a blog should be fun. Think of it as a daily diary of ideas, thoughts and interesting information that you are providing your readers, but the best part about creating a blog is the software is free.

The three best blogging software options are:

Blogger.com
Wordpress.com
Wordpress.org (*step-by-step installation tutorial included at the end of this guide)*

Blogger.com, a Google product, is by far the easiest. It's a simple sign-up and follow the instructions. There's no domain to purchase or hosting fees to worry about and it's *completely* free to use.

There are however, some limitations with how much control you have and your domain name will have the word 'blogger' in it, but if that's not a problem for you it's the best free blogging tool out there.

Wordpress.com is similar to blogger.com but a little more awkward to use. One of the drawbacks is Wordpress.com doesn't allow Google Adwords and other advertising, they do their own. It's not really one of my favorites due to it's limitations and advertising restrictions, however it's also free to use.

Wordpress.org is, in my opinion, the best blogging choice. Unlike Wordpress.com this is a self-hosted blogging software meaning you will need to purchase your own domain name and have a your own hosting service, but you have complete control of the look and feel and what you put on the site.

Creating a blog with Wordpress.org requires you to download the software to your hard drive and

upload it to your hosting service.

I've created several blogs with Wordpress.org. It's a little more complicated to install but once installed it's easy to use and is a great way to begin building your online business *super* cheap.

If you'd like to go this route, I've included a step by step process for creating a Wordpress self-hosted blog from scratch that you'll find in Part II of this guide.

Making Money with Your Website or Blog

There are many ways to make money with your blog or website so let's discuss the *best* ways.

Affiliate Marketing

If you're trying to figure out how you're going to make money with your website when you don't have your own product, affiliate marketing is an ideal solution.

With affiliate marketing there's no direct selling. It's the product owner's job to actually sell the product, it's the affiliate marketer's job to pre-sell the product or *warm up* the potential buyer by using effective promotional strategies. If your promotions are successful and you make a sale, you receive a commission.

Besides not needing a product of your own affiliate marketing relieves you of shipping and inventory worries and you won't have to deal directly with customer issues. What's more is affiliate programs are free to join.

The first dollar I ever earned online was from an affiliate sale and I've been a big fan ever since.

The key to affiliate marketing is creating a website that addresses a specific interest or need and promote products or services that fill a need or are highly relevant to what your site is about.

This is by no means a get rich quick form of making money online, because it's easier than most online business models many beginners are misled and jump in without the proper guidance.

The first dollar I ever earned online was from an affiliate sale and I've been a big fan ever since. I've since been able to make a nice income from it. I could probably go on for the duration of this guide on the topic but I'll spare you ;-) However, if affiliate marketing interests you and you're interested in getting involved, please be smart about it and learn how to be successful from the get go.

My introduction came from Rosalind Gardner, *yes,* she taught me just about everything I know with regards to affiliate marketing and promotion. She's also got the only guide I recommend on the topic, it's called the Super Affiliate Handbook.

It's an excellent guide and it comes with my highest recommendation. I don't recommend starting an affiliate site without it. You can read more about the guide on my review page: http://homenotion.com/blog/affiliate-marketing/super-affiliate-handbook-2010-review/

Google Adsense & Selling Ad Space

Google Adsense is a unique way to place Google ads on your site and it won't cost you a thing. Simple create a Google Adsense account, it's free, and follow the instructions for adding ads to your site. You will only get paid for those ads that visitors click on but if visitors click you get money.

If you have specific items on your site for sale, placing Adsense ads on your site may not be advisable as the ads may take visitors away from your site, but if you're just starting out or have strictly an informational site or blog, Adsense can help you begin generating some good income.

Once your website has developed some steady traffic you may want to consider selling ad space. There are many advertisers that would love to purchase ad space on a site or blog that has a steady stream of traffic.

eCommerce Website - Selling tangible items or Hard Goods

These are sites that sell hard goods or tangible items. These type of sites are a lot more complicated to set up and require more maintenance.

For example, you will need shopping cart software to allow visitors to buy and purchase products and a merchant account to accept online payment, plus you will need to populate the site with your items for sale.

Depending on how you obtain your items, you'll need to ship them out yourself or perhaps dropship them. There will also be the added tasks of working directly with customers, shipping and inventory tasks as well as bookkeeping.

I have never created an e-commerce website and frankly, I don't want to. There's a lot of administrative duties that don't really interest me.

The closest I have come to an ecommerce website was using BANS (Build A Niche Store). BANS is like an ecommerce site with an affiliate twist. BANS is a site building package that will automatically create an affiliate site for you based on products you choose in eBay®.

First you must sign up with the eBay® affiliate program, then whenever anyone comes to your BANS site and buys something, you get a commission.

I actually like the product and my BANS site generates a steady income for me each month without even promoting it.

Here's my http://homenotion.com/blog/product-reviews/bans-install/ that I did last year to give you an idea of how I use it.

Selling Information or Digital Products

Information has always been a best seller on the internet and will continue to be. People come to the web primarily to find information and if you can effectively provide it – you will do well.

To be successful at selling or marketing information you must first find out what people want to know and then provide it. You can do this by selling the information digitally as with ebooks, guides, online courses, through membership sites or promote the information as an affiliate.

I have created several of my own ebooks and courses that I sell individually from my websites. Because these are digital products I use simple shopping carts provided by Clickbank and PayPal, I have used them both and they work very nicely, however I will say I prefer the Paypal shopping cart better. And of course, because the products are sold digitally I don't have to worry about shipping or inventory.

If you don't want to create your own products you can certainly promote digital products from sites like Clickbank or Paydotcom as an affiliate.

Creating a Membership Site

If you are an expert on a specific topic, creating a subscription or membership site can be a great way to generate consistent income each and every month. I have not created a membership site myself but it's a future goal of mine.

Setting up a membership site requires creating content that is distributed weekly or monthly. It's often referred to as 'fixed term membership' and your content is delivered to paid members through email via an autoresponder.

There's a fair amount of planning with a membership site and billing generally occurs on a monthly cycle so your shopping cart must be set up for that. But the great thing about this type of business model is once you set it up it virtually runs on autopilot.

Membership sites are gaining momentum on the web but there isn't much good information for how to get set up, finding leads and avoiding dropped memberships. The only marketer I know and trust that offers membership site training is Jimmy D. Brown's Membernaire.

I haven't taken the training myself so I can't give you a fair review but judging from other training I've taken from Jimmy he delivers well written easy to understand training which is generally in step-by-step format.

Getting Traffic

There are many ways to get traffic to your website and as you become more familiar with the web you'll find ways that work best for you.

In the meantime these are the traffic generating strategies that I've used and most marketers use to produce the fastest results.

Writing Articles & Guest Blogging

Take up writing as many articles as you can and submitting them to these main article directories:

http://www.ezinearticles.com/
http://www.goarticles.com/
http://www.webpronews.com/
http://www.articledashboard.com/
http://www.isnare.com/

Put the articles on your site first then submit them to the directories. Don't worry about the duplicate content issue, it really *isn't* an issue. If you are concerned tune in to the Warrior Forum, they discuss it here.

You can write the articles yourself or you can hire someone to write them for you. The main objective is to write articles that are easy to read, offer good information and useful advice.

Also learn to craft a compelling resource box for each article that you write that contains a text link pointing back to your website. This will also help your website to rank well for your chosen keywords. Here's how to create a keyword based text link:

 Keywords

Find as many websites or blogs that relate to your site's topic and request to have them post your article on their site with your resource box.

This gives them additional content that all site owners need and its an excellent way for you to gain more exposure.

Here's an example of a resource box I've used in the past:

> Learn more about effective internet marketing with candid, honest advice and internet business building tips from Ms. Liz at http://www.homenotion.com. Sign up for her free marketing tips newsletter and get your free guide on “Strategies for getting tons of free traffic to your web site".

Social Media & Networking

I use to cringe at the thought of social media and networking. It's not only time consuming but I was never sure how it was helping me or if it was helping me at all.

Social marketing will help your business but you'll be wasting your time if you willy nilly jump around from one thing to the other without first knowing what it is you want to accomplish with social media and then using the right social medial tools to help you get there.

So for example, what do you want social media to help you with?

- Are you trying to brand your name or your product?
- Are you trying to bring more referral traffic to your website?
- Are you trying to help with search engine optimization?

Once you determine what you want to achieve with social media you'll know which tools to use and you'll waste a lot less time.

Here's a little guide that can help you determine what social media tools will help you the most:

- If branding your name or your products, your goal should be networking
- If Search engine optimization is your goal you should be building links.
- If trying to get referral traffic your goal would be both networking and Link building.

Social media sites to use based on your goals:

Networking – Most Popular Sites:

- Facebook
- Myspace
- Twitter
- Ning

- Linkedin

Linkbuilding – Most Popular Sites:

- Squidoo (Additional help for using Squidoo)
- Digg
- Del.ic.io.us
- Propeller
- Weebly

Pick 2 or 3 sites that you are most comfortable with depending on your goals and develop a daily plan for using them.

Important:
Social networking is just what it implies, being social, being a *friend.* People need to get to know and like you *first* before they're going to consider buying something from you and social media is the means to help you develop those friends, but if you try to use it as a sales tool you won't be successful.

You're not there to sell, you're there to be connected as a friend. You need to be there when there's a question and ready to help someone if they need it.

Think of it this way, if I have a question on how to potty train my child and my very first encounter with you points me to where I can purchase your potty training guide, I'm not going to be very impressed. What would impress me more would be some friendly advice, that would help me to like you, trust you and shows me that you are the 'go to' person for potty training.

Anything else would be a sales pitch to me and I'd be going elsewhere.

Post To Relevant Forums

This is often an underutilized strategy but it's a great source for generating inbound links.
Start by finding forums that relate to your website's topic. To find forums do a search as follows: "*Your Keyword* forum" (use the quotes). So for example is your site is about 'Soy Candles', type "soy candles forum" into your search window.

Once you find a handful of forums that relate to your site's topic, register to the forum and read their guidelines. Next, create a signature line that includes your website link. Then as often as you can, post questions, make comments, and offer advice. If they have an articles section, post your articles as well.

This does two things for you. It helps you become known as an authority in your niche and brings

individuals to your website; it also generates one way links because each time you make a comment your signature displays your link.

Don’t spam the forums. Writing things like, “nice post”, “thanks for the information” or a comment that is a blatant sales pitch won't interest anyone to have a look at your site, in fact they'll ignore it and in most cases the forum administrator will simply delete it.

Be a contributor by genuinely striving to support and help others. Forum administrators will love you for that and appreciate your participation.

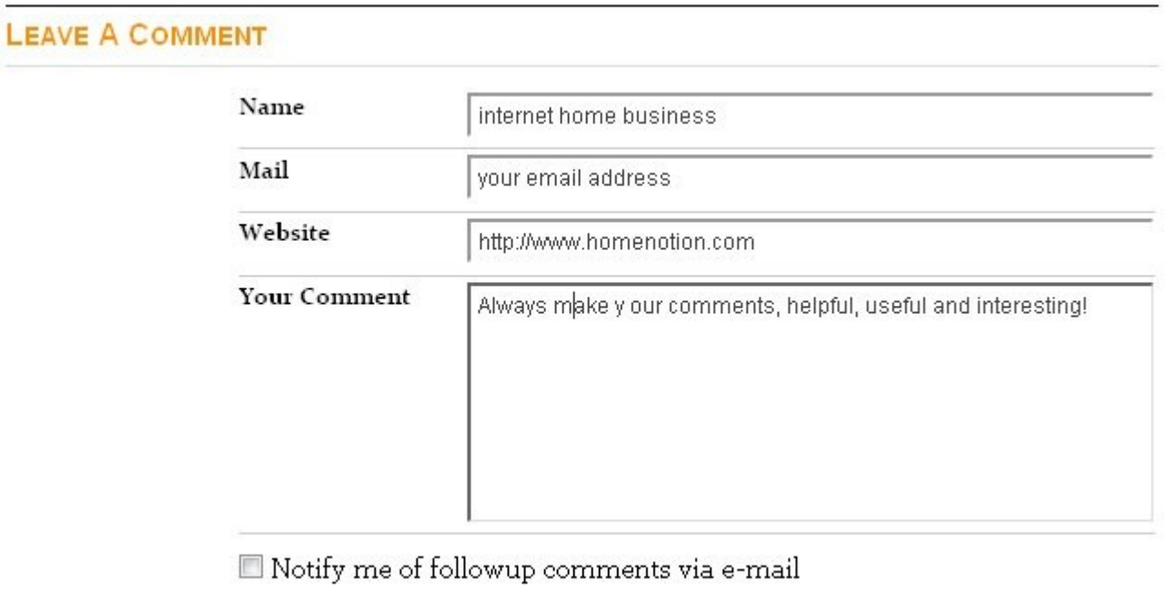
Post to Relevant Blogs

This is another excellent way to bring traffic and links to your website.

Look for blogs that are relevant to your site's topic and post comments. The same rules apply to this as do forums. Be helpful and genuine posting only comments that have meaning and are useful.

Posting Tip: A keyword linking strategy that I often use for getting a link back to my site is to put my best keyword phrase in the 'Name' section of the reply box instead of your real name. This won't work for every blog so you'll have to test this but for those that accept keyword phrases in the name it will link your keyword phrase to your website.

Keep in mind that will provide a link back only if the blog follows the link. Many blogs use the 'nofollow' command in which case you won't get a link back to your site. Here's an example:



Search Engine Optimization

Search Engine Optimization means optimizing your website for the highest search engine ranking possible. T
he higher your site ranks in the search engines for your chosen keyword phrase the more traffic you will get.

SEO is almost a science in itself and comprehensive search engine optimization would be another book by all by itself but here are the basics that will get you off to a good start:

The search engines rank pages, *not* websites, so you must optimize each *page* of your website for relevant keyword phrases while also using logical navigation, employing powerful link strategies and populating your site with content that is highly useful and relevant.

Each page of your website must include an accurate page title, an accurate and focused description. Also both the title and description should contain your best keyword phrase for that page.

Don't make the mistake however, of only focusing on the search engines when it comes to optimizing your site. You need to give the search engines what they want but your main focus should be about giving your visitors what they want as well.

Ranking high in the search engines may bring you lots of traffic but if the traffic isn't interested in your site and users click off within a matter of seconds, high search engine ranking won't mean much.

Let's look at some of the SEO Strategies and tips that work well for both search engine and visitor:

Keep Your Site Focused - Don't be all things to all people. Keep your site niche focused. Don't build a pet site that includes all things for all pets, narrow it down to dogs or cats, and if you can, narrow it down even further for things like 'dog food' or 'dog training' or 'dog medications' for example.

Remember, the more narrowly focused your website is, the more likely you are to attract visitors that will buy.

Logical Website Navigation – Keep your site's navigation structured logically. Your readers need to find what they are looking for without frustration and the search engines need a path to get to all your pages.

Use accurate Title & Description Tags - It amazes me how many people don't use their keywords in the title and description of their site. Instead they use meaningless words or phrases.

'Welcome to my site' would not be a good title for your website. Instead figure out what your best key phrase would be and use it as your title. Then use it again in your site's description.

Also be sure that your keyword phrase accurately describes your page. If your page talks about the benefits of learning to play the piano, a keyword phrase like '*how to play the piano'* would not be an accurate description.

Next, keep in mind that most search engines will use your description tag for listing your page. For example my homenotion home page description is:

<meta NAME="Description" Content="Proven, legitimate internet home business ideas, money making strategies for massive online profits! advice and guidance and help for finding an internet business to start and how to get started quickly without spending a fortune to get there.">

and my Google listing shows up as:

Whatever you use as your site's description is what web surfers are likely to see in the listings so try to craft a description that not only uses your best keyword phrase but also describes the page while highlighting a benefit. It's the closest thing you'll get to free advertising - so use it well.

Most website creation tools will have icons for helping you add your tags, if not here's an example of what the title and description tags look like:

A page about "small dog costumes" tags would look like this:

<HEAD>
<TITLE>Small Dog Costumes – Dog Costumes for the Small or miniature Dog</TITLE>
<META NAME="keywords" CONTENT="small dog costumes, miniature dog costumes">
<META NAME="description" CONTENT="A complete line of small dog costumes at super competitive prices & Fast Delivery.">
</HEAD>

Your keyword phrase should also be part of the header phrase <h1>on your page itself and part of your <img> tag if you have an image on the page.

Also include the same keyword phrase once or twice within the body of the page. Do not, however over use your keyword phrase. You may even notice that for some websites their key phrase isn't used at all on the page. That's because they have other sites linking in to their site using their keyword as link text. (*see external linking below*).

This keyword phrase should also be part of your page's file name, so for example our small dog costumes page should contain a the file name of 'small dog costumes':

http://www.yoursite.com/small-dog-costumes.html or
http://www.yoursite.com/small_dog_costumes.html

Internal Linking – The links that connect one page to another page within your website is referred to as internal linking and it plays a large part in the optimization of your site.

Not all your pages, but your most important pages, should be linked to from at least three other pages of your website and those links should be anchor text links.

For example, our dog costumes site may have a costume page for small dogs that uses the keyword phrase 'small dog costumes'. Three other pages from your site should also link to that page using the anchor text link 'small dog costumes'.

Most site builders will have a hyperlink icon like this that you can use to build the text link, if not here is how to create the link:

 Small Dog Costumes

External linking – In order to rank well in the search engines for your specific keyword phrase you must have other *quality* sites linking to your site. For example, if you want to rank #1, #2 or #3 for the keyword phrase 'red dancing shoes', having an abundance of websites link to your site using the link text 'red dancing shoes' is how to do it.

Today, social bookmarking, networking and commenting make getting these links to your site a more of a natural process, if you don't count the spammers ;-)

Helpful Tip: One of the best guides available for SEO is written by the SEO consultant and internet marketer Dan Thies, called SEO FastStart. The guide is free but I can't recommend it highly enough. If you don't read anything else on search engine optimization, read this and follow what it says. You'll be miles ahead of your competition if you do.

Pay Per Click Advertising

If you're looking for fast, immediate traffic to your site pay-per-click advertising will get it, however I don't recommend using pay per click advertising until you learn about it first.

It's an excellent way to bring immediate traffic to your site but it can be a money pit if you're not careful.

I use pay-per-click advertising for a few of my sites but it took me about 6 months reading and learning about it before I began using it, and even then I made mistakes; there's definitely a process to getting it right.

If you want to try your hand at Google Adwords for example, Brad Callen put out a free Adwords guide that will get you started. It's free but it's fairly comprehensive and gives you all the important strategies you'll need so you don't end up losing more than you can afford.

This is a direct download link to the PDF, left click to open or right click to save it to your hard drive:

http://www.homenotion.com/AWMadeEasy_homenotion.pdf

Part II

Creating Your Self-Hosted Wordpress Blog

If want to build a presence online and of course make money as well, creating a Wordpress blog is without a doubt the easiest, smartest and most cost effective way to get started.

Here's why...

- Wordpress blogs look professional and have an authoritative look about them. All Wordpress themes have a clean, professional appearance. Plus, the Wordpress code and associated plug-ins are all free.

- With a self-hosted Wordpress blog, you have complete control over your code, so you can implement any theme, modify it entirely, or even create your own if you wanted to.

- You are free to change the look or feel of your site whenever you want. You can place ads, back up your data, export data, run analysis, or even sell your blog. You own the domain and all the content within it.

- Wordpress blogs automatically use organization and optimization techniques that the search engines are drawn to meaning your blog will most likely be indexed faster.

- You can create a Wordpress blog to sell your own products or affiliate products.

- Wordpress blogs make it super easy to add and schedule content and their plug-in technology makes it easy to customize for search engine optimization, social bookmarking, adding graphics/video, preventing spam and so much more.

If you have never set up a blog before, this tutorial will give you the step-by-step process for how to *easily* get set up.

A Word About Wordpress Blogs:

We've discussed this briefly in the previous section but for clarity's sake some of the information may be repeated.

There are two types of Wordpress blogs - remotely hosted or self hosted blog. This tutorial will cover setting up a self-hosted blog. In case you are wondering these are the differences:

Wordpress.com - *remotely hosted*
Wordpress.com is a free service you log into. With a few clicks of your mouse you can create a blog. No hosting or domain name is needed.

The drawback to this type of blog is that the options of what you can do are limited, specifically you will have an assigned domain name and a Wordpress.com blog limits your monetization efforts, for example ads like Google Adsense, Yahoo, Chitika, TextLinkAds are not allowed.

Wordpress.org – *self hosted (What we will be doing in this tutorial*)

Wordpress.org contains the Wordpress download software for creating a self-hosted Wordpress blog. There is slightly more to the process of setting up a self-hosted blog as you will first need your own domain name and a hosting service, but the good news is that you can get both of these things for less than $20.

If you are serious about creating an income and projecting a professional image a **self hosted Wordpress blog** will help you stand out among the crowd. Also your ability to customize and monetize has much greater potential.

The purpose of this tutorial is to show you step-by-step how to set up your self-hosted Wordpress blog using **Wordpress.org.**

So if you're ready, let's create your blog...

1.0 Getting Started

Before we start you will need to have two things:

1.1 A Domain Name
1.2. A Hosting Service

If you already have a domain name and hosting service you can move on to part 3.0

1.1 Setting up your Domain Name

In order to create a self hosted blog you will need to set up a domain name first. Before you pick a domain name, first think about what niche you are going to be in. There are lots of ideas on what a good domain name is but don't get too hung up on this.

If you need help choosing a name refer back to Page 7 of this guide.

For tutorial purposes I will use Godaddy.com as an example for setting up your domain name, however whether you use Godaddy or another registrar service the process is the same so feel free to use whatever domain service you prefer.

Selecting and Purchasing your domain name:

1. Start by creating an account with Godaddy.com or whatever service you wish.
2. Once your account is created, login, search for the domain name you want in the box.
3. Select the extension you want (.com, .net, .org, etc)
4. Once you have the name you want click 'add'
5. You will be taken to the registration and checkout options. I recommend checking registration for just 1 year and go with the standard registration.
6. Continue to checkout. Bypass all the customization options and simply go to checkout.
7. Pay for your new domain name and complete purchase.
8. Once you have completed your purchase you will immediately receive an email confirming your purchase and information on how to manage your domain names and name servers which we will set up in our next section.

1.2 Setting up your Hosting Account

In order to have your blog published on the world wide web you will need to have it hosted with a hosting service.

Hosting services are not expensive but it's extremely important to choose one that is reliable and offers good support at all hours of the day/night.

As mentioned in the previous section I use Hostgator and confidently recommend them personally and professionally. They offer quality, reliable hosting for $7.95 a month, they have video tutorials and Live Chat. Good support is very important so you want to make sure you have it.

Whatever hosting service you decide on, this tutorial will assume your host comes with the **Cpanel** and **Fantastico** tools. These are universal hosting tools that most good web hosts have, including Hostgator. They will make your blog setup and use much, much easier and straightforward.

Here's the Hostgator Special Savings: If you use this Hostgator link and the coupon code "*findmyhost*" you will receive your first month Hosting for just $.01

Hosting Signup Process

When signing up with a hosting service, select '**shared hosting'** and select the option '**I will use My Existing Domain and update My Nameservers only**'.

Enter the domain name you registered above.

Complete the registration.

After you have completed the sign-up you should receive an 'account information' email confirming your registration and the information required to complete your setup.

The email will have your IP address, your domain name servers (DNS), and your login information. Hold on to this information you will need it later.

The email should contain the following information:

Your Domain: youdomainname.com
Your Username: yourlogin
Your Password: yourpassword

Your sites IP address: 12.12.134.1234

Nameservers:

NSxx1.hostcompany.com
NSxx2.hostcompany.com

For example if you signed up with Hostgator your name servers will look something like this:

NS001.hostgator.com
NS002.hostgator. com

2.0 Finalizing your Domain and Hosting Setup

In order to coordinate your your domain name and your hosting account you will need to log back into your Godaddy or domain registration account, and do the following:

1. Go to the 'domains' tab and click on 'my domains'

2. Click on your domain name you just purchased

3. Go down to the 'Nameservers' section and click on 'manage'.

4. Select the option that says:

    I host my domains with another provider

    For the 'Nameserver1' and 'Nameserver2' options, enter the name servers that Hostgator sent you in the 'Account Information' email we discussed above.

3.0 Setting up Your Wordpress blog

At this point you should have your new domain name purchased, your hosting setup, and your domain name pointing to Hostgator or whatever hosting service you are using.

Now we are ready to install Wordpress.

We will do this from your Hosts '**Cpanel'** using **Fantastico.**

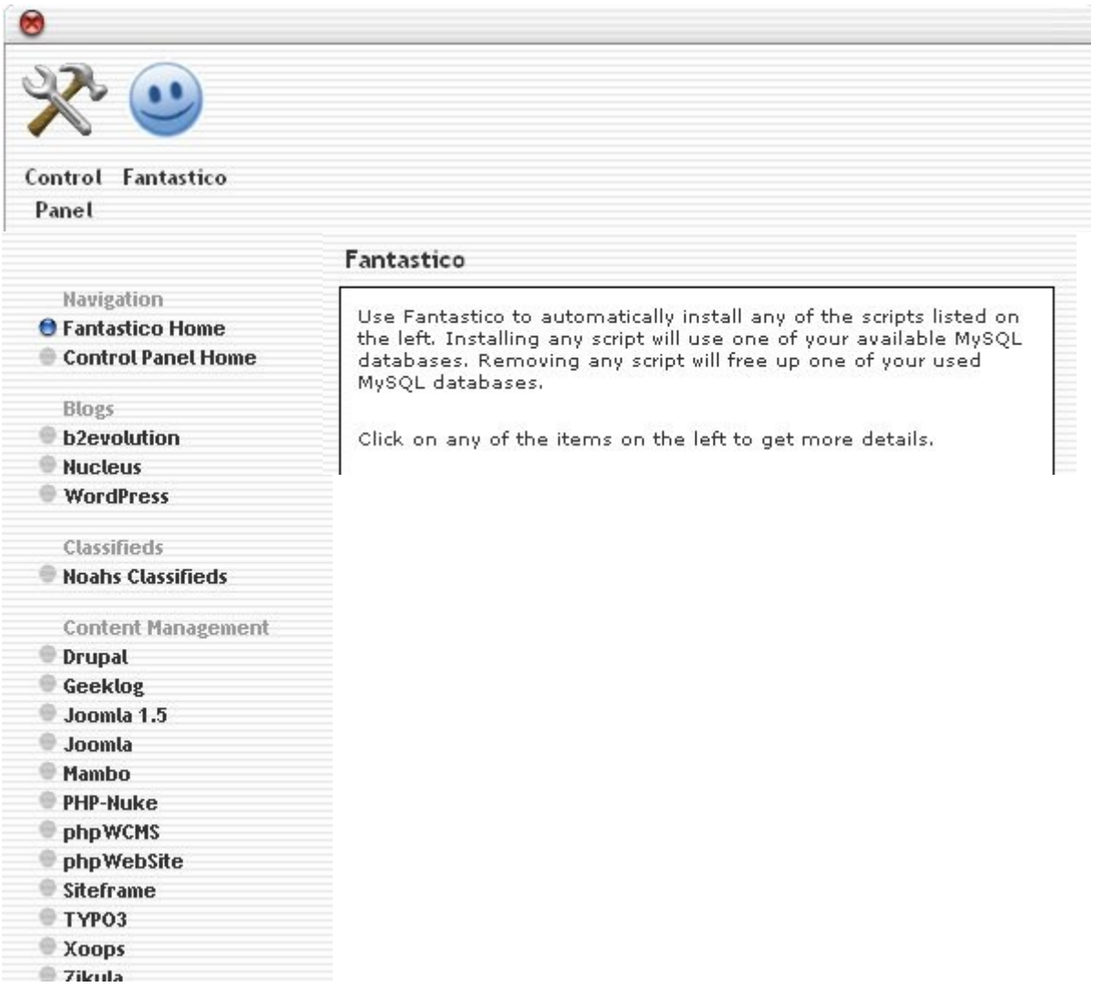
1. Log into your Hosting account with the instructions that were sent to you upon signup.

Once logged in you will see a screen similar to the following:

1.

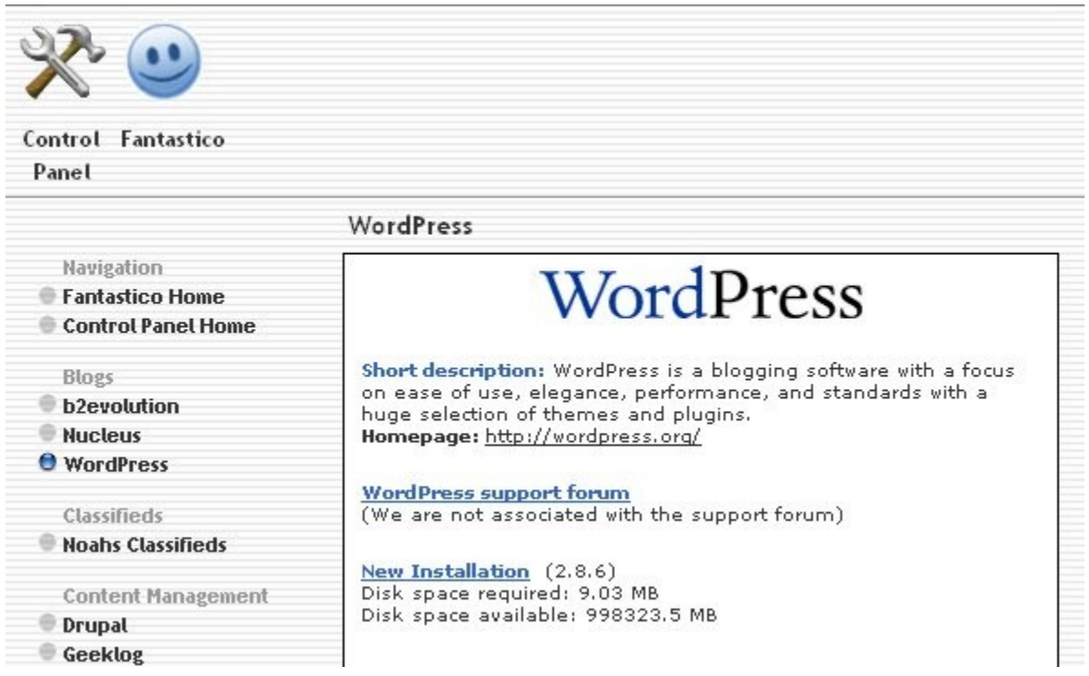
2. Scroll down and look for 'Software/Services' and click on the **'Fantastico De Luxe'** icon:

3. Next you will be taken to the Fantastico page:



4. Click on the '**Wordpress**' option on the left

   The Wordpress selection will bring up this page. Click on '**New Installation**'



5. Clicking on 'New Installation' will display the following screen. Simply complete the fields as described below:

Installation Location:

Install on domain - This is where you will put the domain name you just purchased. For example, if your domain name is greatcameras.com you will enter 'greatcameras.com' into this field.

Install in directory:

If you want to access your blog with www.yourblog.com then leave this field blank.

If you want your blog in another directory, then you would enter the directory name here (this directory should not already exist, it will be automatically be created).

For example, if you already have a website and you are adding a blog, you might access it as 'www.yoursite/blog', so in this case you would type 'blog' in this field.

Admin Access Data:

Administrator user name - This is the username you will access your Wordpress Admin area with. This can be any name of your choosing but should be something you will remember.

Password - This will be your password for your Wordpress Admin area. It can be any password of your choosing but again, it should be something you will remember.

Base Configuration:

Admin nickname - This can be the same as the user name if you like.

Admin Email - Email you wish to use.

6. Click “Install Wordpress'

This will take you to a screen that tells you that the databases have been created, just click on Finish Installation.

Congratulations! Your Wordpress blog should now be created. You will receive an email at the email you entered above describing your installation.

7. Start Blogging

You should now be able to go to your Wordpress admin area by tying the following into your browser window:

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

You should now see your Wordpress login window:

Enter the login and password you created in step 5 above.

Now we are ready to customize your new blog.

Most of what you see in Wordpress is a matter of clicking around and getting familiar with how to customize it. You can do most of the customization on your own, however I'll help you get started by helping you set up a theme and a few plug-ins.

4.0 Setting up Your Wordpress Theme

Your new Wordpress blog will default to the basic Wordpress theme which is a little dull, so you may want to find a theme that is a little more interesting.

There are thousands of themes to choose from and the great thing about Wordpress is that you can change your theme with just a few clicks of your mouse.

So let's choose and install a new theme:

Go to http://wordpress.org/extend/themes/

This page of Free Wordpress themes that you can choose from. There are also other sites to choose themes from, both paid and free, however these are some of the basic themes.

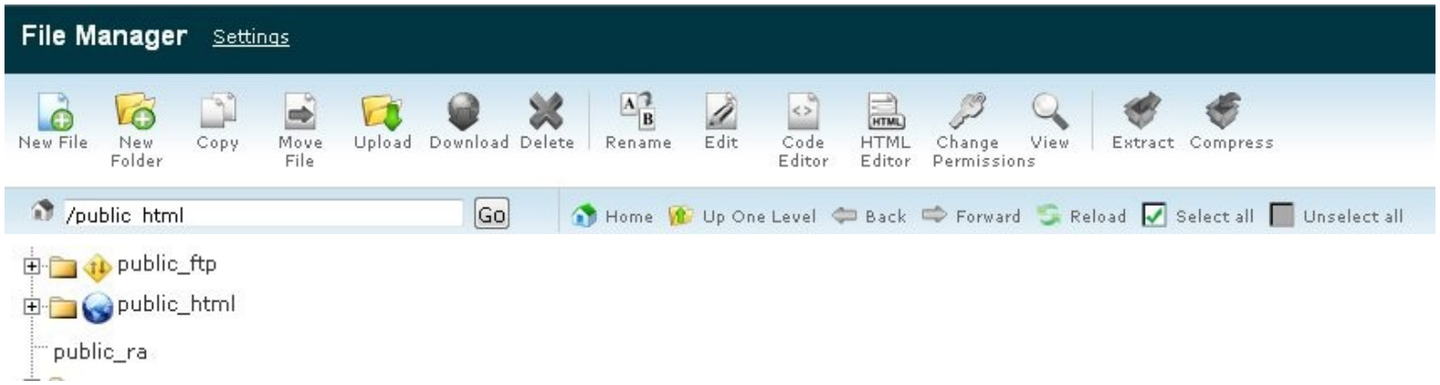
Once you find a theme that you like, you will install it to your hard drive then upload it to your hosts files at this location:

/public_html/blog/wp-content/themes

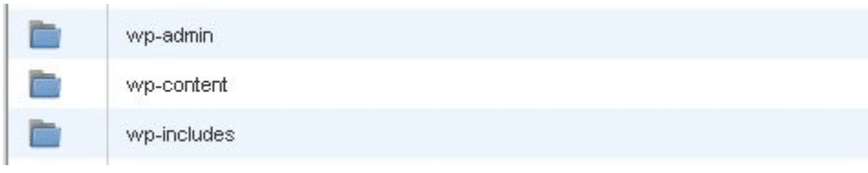
Here's how to do that:

1. For the theme that you want to use, click on the download button and save it to your hard drive, remember where you save it, you will need this later on.
2. Next, log on to your Hostgator or your host's '**Cpanel**'
3. On your Cpanel Screen under Files, locate the 'File Manager' icon

4. Click on the 'File Manager' which will bring you to the file manager or a similar screen to this. Locate public_html and click on it.



5. You should see the following Wordpress folders:



6. Double click on the '**wp-content**' folder
7. Next Double click the '**Themes**' Folder
8. Next at the top of the page click '**upload**'. You are going to upload the theme you previously downloaded to your hard drive. If you click on the 'browse' button you will see a display of your hard drive. Simply find your theme that you downloaded earlier and select it for upload.

Next, your themes folder will contain the theme you just uploaded. If the files are in zipped format, click the '**extract'** icon at the top to unzip the files.

9. If you are not logged into your Wordpress admin area, log in to it now as explained in Step 7 of 'Setting up your Wordpress blog'.

10. Under your 'Dashboard' area go to 'Appearance' and select 'Themes'. The new theme that you just added should display on the main screen. Simply click on the theme to upload it to your blog. If you would like to change your theme, simply perform the same process as outlined above. This will bring in the themes to your file folders and you can pick and choose the themes that you wish to use.

5.0 Customizing and Monetizing your Blog

Your next steps will be to effectively customize and monetize your blog for reaching the most people and making the most money.

Most of your customization will be done through Wordpress plug-ins and you can read more about them on the Wordpress plugin site.

The most commonly used plug-ins are:

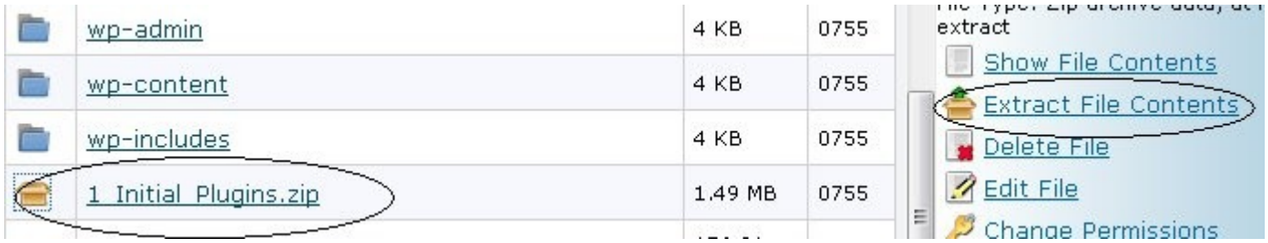
- Akismet (should come with Wordpress download, if not use this link)
- Google Adsense Plugin – Easily add Google Adsense Ads to your blog
- Add a Search Box Plugin – Add a search box to your blog, highly recommended.
- Wordpress Database backup (should come with download but if not use this link)
- Twitter for Wordpress
- Wordpress Video Plugin – lets you instantly add a video

The Wordpress database backup is *important* so be sure you activate that plugin and backup your database on a regular basis. You don't want to lose all the work you put into creating your blog posts.

The Wordpress plugins are installed the same way you installed your theme. Simply download the plugin to your hard drive, then go to your hosts file Manager and bring in the plugin, your plugins must be downloaded to your plug-in file at this location:

/public_html/blog/wp-content/plugins

One more thing to note - When uploading files to your host they sometimes comes in as zipped files. If that happens simply click on the 'extract file contents' located on the right hand side of your file manager. This will unzip your files to the same folder.



Further Optimizing & Customizing Your Blog

For more optimizing and customizing your blog, tune in to my blogs and blogging category on my homenotion blog.

Also I highly recommend Darren Rowse's ProBlogger site. It's full of tips and ideas for your blog.

Since Darren's successful website launch on blogging, he has since wrote his popular book simply titled '*Problogger*'. I purchased the book several months ago and it's full of hot tips and useful information - but check out the information on his blog first, it will give you tons of good information and personal tips that I know you'll find helpful.

A Few Final Words...

I hope this has helped motivate you to create your website or blog.

The most important step for anyone is to take action – *get started!* Don't be one of those people that buys books, guides and videos leaving them to clutter your hard drive and never doing anything with them. Make a plan and work your plan.

Keep in mind that your success isn't likely to happen overnight. It could take a year, maybe 2 or 3 years but it will *never* happen unless you first commit to making it happen. No one can do this buy *you.*

Getting started on the web is still cheap and with a few hours a day you could be creating a nest egg that will pay off for years to come.

If you have questions or comments please post them on our Discussion Forum. I love hearing from readers and I will personally answer your questions ;-)

Have a great time creating your website, or blog, and I wish you much success!

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