

A Quick Note about Plug-Ins

Plug-ins are basically add-on applications they give you greater flexibility with your WordPress blog. They are typically designed by fellow bloggers who are also coders and they design these plug-ins to help execute a specific function with a WordPress blog, whether it be for; SEO purposes, aesthetic purposes, or to increase user interactivity.

Many coders create these plug-ins to fill a need in their own personal blogging activities but they also make these plug-ins available to the broader WordPress community. Nearly all of these plug-ins are absolutely free but you will notice on the download page for most plug-ins or on the settings page for each plug-in (in the dashboard of your WordPress blog) a button where you can donate any sum of money. It's not mandatory to donate money to these coders but it shows them that you appreciate their efforts and encourages them to create more great plug-ins that we all can benefit from and so I think it's a good idea, even if it's just a few dollars.

Plug-Ins Are Great but Don't Overdo Them

In this document I have listed quite a number of plug-ins that I feel are either essential or, if not essential, very good to have. This list is certainly not set in stone and you're free to mix and match with any plug-ins that you choose. Having said that, if you add too many plug-ins to your blog it can slow it down and so it's best to not go overboard with installing them on your site.

The main point that I wanted to make is that this list is certainly not fixed, it's just a very good starting point.

Essential Plug-Ins

Akismet by Matt Mullenweg – because people can interact with your blog through the commenting feature this leaves you exposed to spammers who want to leave links back to their unsavory sites. This plug-in basically acts as a spam filter and comes with WordPress by default however you do need to create a WordPress account so that you can enter in an API key to get this plug-in to work (this is covered in detail in the video tutorials).

All In One SEO Pack by Uberdose -- this plug-in allows you to configure your blog and your blog posts so that the search engines will be able to find and index your content very easily.

Google Sitemaps by Arne Brachhold -- this plug-in creates a single page with links to every page on your entire site and this makes it very easy for Google to index every page on your blog and it also makes it easy for visitors if they are looking for specific information on your site.

WP-DBManager -- this plug-in makes backing up your blog a one click procedure. Whenever you make any changes to your blog it's a good idea to back it up beforehand.

WordPress Stats by Andy Skelton -- this plug-in allows you to see how many visitors you're getting to your site, which blog posts they are reading, and which links are getting clicked on. It's not quite as powerful as Google analytics but it gives you very good information about the visitors of your blog.

Google Analytics for WordPress by Joost de Valk -- this plug-in allows you to add a short string of numbers from your Google Analytics account to your blog and then you'll be able to get in-depth information about visitors such as; what search engine they used to find you, which keywords they typed in, how long they spent on your site, which pages they viewed, which links they clicked on, and which page they exited your site from. There is also a whole host of other information you're able to collect using Google Analytics combined with this plug-in. It's very, very useful.

Secure and Accessible PHP Contact Form by Mike Cherim & Mike Jolly -- you would think that a platform such as WordPress would come with a contact form by default, but it doesn't. This plug-in allows you to add a contact form to your blog and you'll probably be surprised by how many people use this method to contact you. It's a real waste and not to have this on your blog.

Important Note: this contact form is usually unable to be found via the usual method of doing a search from your WordPress admin area. You will need to follow this link http://green-beast.com/logger_dl_wp-gbcf.php and save the zipped file to your desktop. Next, you will need to extract that file and then go to your FTP client and upload it to the relevant folder. You can watch a short video tutorial showing you exactly how to do this on the configuring your blog page within the WordPress series.

RB Internal Links by Arron Woods -- this is a very handy little plug-in because it allows you to easily link to other blog posts and pages that you have on your site.

Recent Posts by Momrick -- this plug-in allows you to have a list of your most recent posts in the sidebar area of your blog. This is a really nice and easy way for readers to see what you've been writing about recently and helps people click through to different pages on your blog.

WP-Cache by Ricardo Galli Granada -- this plug-in allows your WordPress blog to load faster for your visitors.

Internal Link Building by SEO ROI Services -- this plug-in allows you to build internal links on your website automatically. Basically what you can do is set a keyword and then match that to a URL on your blog. Whenever you mention that keyword in any post on your blog it will automatically create a link to the page on your blog that you designated.

Note: This plugin can't be found in the WordPress directory, you have to go to the author's site to get it. The way he has it set is that you have to subscribe to his RSS feed and then the download link is in the footer of his feeds. (If you are unsure how to do this I've created a video that is posted in the Configuring Your Blog Section of the WordPress Series). Here's the link to his website -- <http://seoroi.com/specialty-services/new-seo-plugin-for-wordpress-internal-link-building/>

MaxBlogPress Ping Optimizer by MaxBlogPress -- in the Configuring Your Blog video we talked about setting up your ping list. Basically this is a list of blog directories that your blog notifies automatically each time you create a blog post. This is really good but if you publish a

blog post and then realize you have a mistake or a typo and change that, all of those directories will be notified again when you save those changes and you don't want that to happen. This plug-in prevents that from happening, your blog posts will only ever be pinged once -- the first time you publish them.

Note: In order to activate this plug-in you are required to enter your name and e-mail address which means you will go on the mailing list of the people that created this plug-in. They will try and sell you all sorts of things related to blogging. If you don't want to receive their e-mails, just go to the bottom and unsubscribe, the plug-in will still work fine. Other than using the plug-in, I've had no experience with the plug-in author's products and so I can't make a comment one way or the other. What I will say is that within the Renegade Professional training area you have all the knowledge and information that you need to succeed... so why spend extra money?

Non Essential BUT Good to Have

Sociable by Joost de Valk -- this plug-in allows you to put icons from various social media at the bottom of each of your blog posts. This allows your readers to bookmark, vote, and syndicate your content through their favorite social media sites.

Blog Metrics by Joost de Valk -- this plug-in allows you to get statistics about your own blogging activities. Basically it will give you information about how often you post to your blog, how many words your blog posts are, and how many comments your blog posts receive. It's just a good way to get a snapshot of your own blogging activities.

Dagon Design Sitemap Generator -- this plug-in is very similar to the Google Site Maps Plug-In but it just arranges the information in a more usable format for your readers but the search engines will also love it.

What Would Seth Godin Do by Richard K Miller -- this is a great plug-in, what allows you to do is set a little message that pops up at the top of your blog post inviting new readers to subscribe to your RSS feed. You can set it to show up for the first 1, 5, or 50 times a person lands on your site. By default it's set to show for the first five times someone arrives on your site and then it just disappears. This is a great way to build your list of RSS feed subscribers.

WP Auto Tagger by iDope -- at the bottom of each blog post you have an area where you can enter in the main keywords that relate to your post. This plug-in will suggest those tags based upon the content within your post and so basically just makes it easy to select the relevant keywords.

Disqus WordPress Commenting System -- one of the most powerful aspects of a blog is the ability to allow readers to interact with you and each other. This plug-in gives you and your readers a tremendous amount of flexibility in how comments can be managed. You'll find a separate video dedicated to setting up and using this plug-in as it has many excellent features that you should be aware of.