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INTRODUCTION

Blogging isn't hard to do; anyone can put up a blog on their own server and run it successfully without problems. Understanding the process is really simple and I'm going to explain it all right here.

It's probably one of the most versatile ways to get in touch with a lot of people for product sales; other ways like Twitter limit you to a number of characters or will tag you for spam if you meet certain criteria.

You can literally have a blog up and running within in a matter of minutes. But knowing how to put up a blog is only part of it; you also need to know how to give it traffic.

For this eBook, I'm going to assume you have some money to put into this endeavor. Not because I think you should be spending a lot of money, but because I think you should have at the very least \$35 available, which would be the most this would cost if you decided to go with my ideas.

If you don't have the \$35 available, I'm not going to say you don't belong in this business because everyone has to start

somewhere. For me to assume that everyone shares the same financial level as everyone else would be ludicrous at best. While I am dismissive of the free hosting methods I have given in here, they can work if you are careful in executing your plan. That means no spamming and no aggressive marketing.

This book is broken up into logical sections for you, as the beginner or the advanced blogger so you can follow it easily.

“Blogging Basics” shows you the different types of blogs and how they are related, and then focuses on the two most important types for this book.

“Starting a Blog” tells you why you should host your own blog, which software to use, finding a hosting company, and finding a registrar.

“Choosing a Niche” takes the two scopes and tells you how to map out your research starting with a good domain name.

“Blog Installation and Setup” tells you how to do just that, including themes and plug-ins.

“Your Content” tells you how to add your content and what it should contain for the best approach.

“Getting Traffic” will explore traffic methods for your blog.

As you go through this book you will find that it's really simple and if you follow the plan then you'll have a successful blog up and running in no time at all.

BLOGGING BASICS

A blog, short for "web log", was originally a way for people to have an online diary; they would update people on their lives in a personal way. It took a while for this concept to catch on but when it did we saw the inception of LiveJournal and Blogger.

There are three main types of blog focus: personal, corporate, and product. The first two are essentially obvious; the focus would be either a single person's perspective or from the perspective of a company. The last type is a little bit more complex; you could have a blog about a product or a series of products that are all related.

The standard blog is one that you would use either a laptop or a desktop to post text; outside that scope, you would have blogs labeled by their media type (i.e., vlogs for video logs) or the device used to post on them (moblogs or mobilogs for blogs that use PDAs or Smartphones for their main interface).

THE POWER OF A BLOG

Understanding what they are is just the beginning; you have to understand what they can do. There are many people who understand this simple concept and they're raking in the cash as you're reading this right now or taking their own opinions and showing people its apparent validity.

Blogs are more than just sites on the net; they can have actual power. And depending on what the blog focuses on will change the scope of that power.

THE PERSONAL SCOPE: POLITICS

If you have a personal site and established enough popularity, you could easily have a grassroots campaign that can sway public opinion.

There are plenty of examples of this around now and if you're politically involved you have visited a lot of these. If you're not, you can find links to them at CNN or another news site or do a search for political blogs on Google.

Without citing specific examples, the press had come to understand the power of bloggers during the last couple of United States presidential elections.

Bloggers would be paying attention at various political venues and would post opinions about issues raised by candidates. Sometimes they were just outright questions and if they went

ignored by the candidate, the backlash would be overwhelming and they'd have to watch themselves drop in the polls.

In all fairness, it's not just the blogs; it's also all of the Web 2.0 sites out there that can make just about anything go viral in an instant. One candidate had to drop out of a senate race because he got angry at hecklers and expressed himself in a vulgar fashion at one of his rallies because a blogger saw it happen, blogged about it, and posted the video on YouTube.

THE CORPORATE SCOPE: EXTERNAL BUSINESS

A popular corporate site would allow you to have free advertising on a huge scale. Plenty of popular companies use this to advertise new services they have (such as Google) or products that are coming out (such as Adobe).

Imagine you are the official blogger for a company who is racing to put out the next revolutionary technology. If you are the first to announce that yours is ready, then you've already won the race provided your product's quality and price is in a competitive range with the competitors.

THE CORPORATE SCOPE: INTERNAL BUSINESS

Having a blog about your company where only your company would be reading it may seem like it's a little too focused with a narrow scope, but this is actually a very important tool.

Posting updates about progress or anything else can help your peers know where everyone with regards to their project so project managers can properly plan and coordinate.

This can also raise morale during economic slumps, or let everyone know that a special visitor will be arriving for inspection. Just about every major business has a newsletter they publish, and this makes it easier without having to worry about how and when to publish.

Instead of receiving information periodically, employees can now receive it “as it happens”. This can allow a company to be updated with events in a critical manner instead of having to draft a memo, copy it, and distribute it among the co-workers.

THE PRODUCT SCOPE: PROBLEM ORIENTED

This is easy to visualize if you think about it. If you have a problem with acne and you search for acne cures, you’re going to find sites that deal with acne as the problem and provide you solutions on how to fix that problem.

It would be multiple solutions for a singular problem, and the number of solutions for such a problem could number just as many sites that exist for that problem.

Our stores are set up this way – when you go to the first aid section, you have multiple solutions on how to treat wounds and

the potentially resultant infections. A problem-oriented product blog is no different.

THE PRODUCT SCOPE: SOLUTION ORIENTED

You are also already familiar with this type of mechanism. If you know what product you want to solve your problem and do a search for it, you'll come up with sites dedicated to that solution, such as "Açaí Berries".

Our stores are ALSO set up this way. If you walk in there won't be a chaos of products – you'll see a section for "food" and a section for "non-food". These are usually not mixed. Non-food sections are typically broken up into further sub-categories, such as cleaning supplies, clothes, shoes, and stationary.

Within these sections, you would find products that you may not even think about using because they wouldn't pop into your head. But, when exposed with their presence, they can easily be an option for you. Likewise, a popular product oriented blog could provide enough sales leads for even the most obscure products.

If you needed antibiotic ointment, you wouldn't go to the stationary section; so this is a real life example of a solution oriented scheme. Think in terms of a "mock review site" or a site about dealing with a particular medical condition where you provide multiple solutions.

If you have a review site and give good, reliable information, then you could gain a lot of followers who are waiting for you to review that new product. Most review sites do best when they're not "all-encompassing". That's because people inherently believe in authority. The site has to establish itself in a particular niche – you wouldn't go to a computer hardware review site to look up reviews on make-up or bicycles.

YOUR RELEVANT INFORMATION

It certainly seems like I have covered a lot of useless information, but you're going to see that later in this book I'll show you exactly how all of this pertains to you as the blogger and internet marketing strategist.

I needed you to understand the fundamental concepts and perspectives of each type of blog so you'll know how to use each one and know where I'm coming from when I talk about it later.

You should have an understanding of how blogs are updated; whether it's from a keyboard from your laptop or desktop which is the usual method or by some mobile device which is becoming the new trend.

You should also know that blogs can be updated by not just text, but also by pictures with or without commentary, videos, and

other types of media that can be available. You can see this in Tumblr and Facebook with their blogging interfaces.

A place like Tumblr is specifically designed to be a microblogging platform with a mobile interface. By linking a Tumblr account with a singular mobile device, you can easily provide updates. While this is an effective blogging method, this is to be used as an advanced technique for traffic and exposure, to be talked about later in this book.

THE PROCESS

As I said earlier, starting a blog is easy. You just have to know where to start, and that's what I'm going to show you. You'll need to make several decisions, and since I said I was going to assume you have the cash, I'm going to assume you're going for the proper method.

I say "proper" method because while the "free" method is viable, it's nowhere near the option because of the limited amount of flexibility and freedom that you will need.

To put it before anything else I say so you can skip most of this if you want, a paid hosting solution with your own domain offers you the most freedom and control over your own space.

If you actually understand how this works, then feel free to jump to the section about software to use. The following information about free vs. paid is for people who need further clarification.

HOSTING: FREE VERSUS PAID

Hosting your blog for free means you've gone to Blogger.com, WordPress.com, or maybe even LiveJournal.com and set up your blog. Yes, you won't have to pay a hosting bill and you can get a neat name like your-blog-name.wordpress.com, but you'll have to deal with their rules.

YOU VERSUS THEM

You might be one of those people that live in a democracy where freedom of speech is rampant and you might be thinking you should be able to say anything you want to since it's a free country. You would be wrong; blogs and similar internet "spaces" are private and therefore are excepted from the rules which are for public areas. Hosting your blog on *their* site means *their* rules, and their rules may not be the best for you.

One of the most limiting factors when hosting on their site means you have to restrict your links. Whether it's what you link to or the frequency of your linking, you're being limited. So, you're saying, just follow their rules.

It's not that simple. You can follow their rules and jump through their hoops, but because it's their system, they decide if you've broken any rules and you get no recourse. You face deletion or banning, and if you've picked up some popularity, then your site will die one day and no one will know why – or maybe they will if they follow you enough.

I'm not saying DON'T have a blog on their site. As a matter of fact, you certainly can. Just remember that you should offload the users onto your domain as quickly as possible, and I'll discuss how to do that later. Your domain should be the main setting for all of your information or you will come to regret that decision the first time you get banned and deleted.

SOFTWARE TO USE

Since you're going to host it on your servers, you're going to use WordPress. You could use other software but I'm going to show you how to install, use, and customize WordPress. It's all very easy for the most part and it can all be done within the "Dashboard" or admin panel.

There are a bunch of reasons to use WordPress, but I'm going to tell you the most obvious ones: it's heavily supported, it works well, and it's easy to install, use, and customize.

Feel free to experiment with other blogging software for what's right for you because this is a personal experience and you could only benefit if you learn new things.

FINDING A HOSTING COMPANY

I'm going to be direct: I use HostGator and I think you should too. Getting deeper into the matter is which version of hosting you should use, and for that I recommend the reseller package for various reasons.

The first is that your interface is better organized and separated. I'm a big fan of organization, and I happen to think their "BabyCroc" package is just a little too chaotic, but then again I am somewhat of a control freak.

The second is an important one for me – the email address. On the BabyCroc package, your email addresses are the same, so if someone emails admin@oneofyourdomains.com, it's also going to come to admin@anotheroneofyourdomains.com. This can be messy, and once again, is the antithesis of organization.

Yes, the reseller package is \$24.95 (compared to the \$9.95 for BabyCroc), but well worth it in my opinion. But, whatever you choose, there are a couple of requirements that you must have to make your life easier (the first three of these are directly from WordPress):

1. PHP 4.3 or greater
2. MySQL 4.0 or greater
3. The mod_rewrite Apache module
4. Fantastico

If you are not sure, then write a letter to sales before you purchase your hosting and ask them to make sure they give you the plan that fits these requirements.

One thing to note is that you will not need a hosting plan that is bigger than \$24.95 per month. There are hosting companies that will try to charge you a lot more and you should watch out for hidden charges.

FINDING A REGISTRAR

So, now you know where to host your blog and you're ready to purchase your hosting. The one thing you'll notice is that you're going to need a domain name in order to sign up for an account.

The conundrum is also that it seems you need a hosting account to sign up for a domain – but it's not so confusing because you can actually use the registrar's nameservers temporarily or just park it until you get your hosting set up.

The biggest problem in this scenario is that if you change the information too many times in a short period, you will have to

“wait until the dust settles” with all of the nameserver propagation which could take up to 72 hours if you have a lot of conflicting information.

This is because when you feed the information to the nameservers, they will distribute it. Then, while distributing it, you submit different information, it will distribute it again, but the first information is still being distributed along with the second wave.

This nasty little situation will compound if you submit a lot of times, so make sure you enter the correct information the first time just to be safe. I have actually had to wait about 5 days for a domain to resolve because I mixed up my hosting accounts and put in the wrong information twice.

WHO NOT TO USE

You have a wide selection of registrars to choose from, but there are some you should not have a part of your selection pool for various reasons. You may choose to deal with these registrars; and if you’ve had luck with them then by all means don’t stop using them.

There are more that actually deserve to be on this list, but I didn’t feel the need to research any more than this. These people

have made my list simply because the situations I am describing happened not only to me, but also a bunch of other people.

REGISTERFLY

I'm not sure what happened with these people, but they had a good service record and they were one of the cheapest registrars.

But, one day, they decided to refuse support so emails would go unanswered. When people started panicking and wanted to transfer their domains away from them, they trapped the domain names and prevented transfers while they were losing their ICANN status. This was messy and a company that would do this doesn't deserve a second chance.

GODADDY

Spamming is bad, and if you're caught doing it, then you should pay. And I'll agree that most of the time, it's really easy to spot a spammer. The problem comes in when you're accused of spamming and then the registrar deactivates your domain and steals it from you when it's not your fault, or if you can prove you are sending legitimate emails. No one had recourse.

A REGISTRAR YOU SHOULD USE

There has been one registrar that I have relied on for several years now. I have used both RegisterFly and GoDaddy while searching for domain names, and at times when I haven't any money I would wait until the next day to register – only to come back to find the names I had wanted were registered already.

At that time I didn't actually understand people were able to see what was being searched for in a live setting so they could see what was "popular". So far, I haven't been victimized by domain speculators while using NameCheap.

And NameCheap's price is acceptable also – they're \$8.41 with a coupon which you can usually find if you Google "NameCheap coupon". It also comes with free anonymous WhoIs registration for the first year if you're interested in that.

Earlier I talked about HostGator as your hosting solution, but if you don't want to go with HostGator, you could NameCheap as your all-in-one solution for both domain registration and domain hosting.

This would be particularly helpful if you're having domain resolution issues or any hosting related issues. This is the only way to have a complete solution without having to contact one tech support and getting an answer, then submitting that information to the other tech support.

Even if you don't choose NameCheap or HostGator, you should choose a registrar that's relatively inexpensive because you shouldn't pay more than \$10 per domain name per year and the convenience of WhoIs protection shouldn't be more than \$2 per domain per year.

Beyond those guidelines, you should Google the potential registrar and see if there are a lot of recurring problems with them. All registrars are going to have some problems because it's the nature of doing business, but you shouldn't see problems dominate the first or second page of the SERPs for the particular registrar.

CHOOSING A NICHE

Before you can actually get your domain and host it, you need to figure out what niche you want to cover. While you can cover broader topics as a whole, you need to strategically plan out and cover multiple related niches in order to dominate.

KEYWORD RESEARCH CROSSROADS

You may already have an idea of what you would like to cover and if not then now is the time to brainstorm some ideas. For this eBook, I'm going to cover blogs from the product scope, either solution oriented or problem oriented – each scope is

going to require you to approach your keyword research slightly differently.

THE PROBLEM-ORIENTED BLOG

There are millions of people who use the net every day that have a problem, whether it would be insomnia, acne, thinning hair, or trying to lose weight.

The first part of this process is to think about your site's focus. For each scope of a blog, there is going to be a different focal point. And when you learn to take the focal point and design the entire structure for the site, you can duplicate it for your next projects.

Problem: Insomnia

Your blog is all about insomnia and how to deal with it. You would have pages that talk about causes of insomnia and maybe how to mitigate those causes.

Following that, you would have a whole product line dedicated to curing insomnia, possibly including herbal remedies, over-the-counter pills, exercises, eBooks, or anything else you might find.

Finally, each solution to the problem could have a review written up for it, to show what the pros and cons of the solution would be – all leading to the ultimate goal: to sell a product.

Keyword Research Direction

You're going to focus on providing people a resource set for sleeplessness and other related terms. You're targeting people who can't sleep for whatever reason. You can get into the causes later, but shoot for a general domain name that would encompass this concept or at least be very similar.

The people in this group are in the investigation phase, since they're seeing what causes their problems. It's up to you to convince them to buy one of your solutions you have on your site.

The idea isn't that you would need to get an exact match for your niche keyword list; the pages you would create on your site would help you with your keyword placement. You want the pages to rest on a site that would make sense.

THE SOLUTION-ORIENTED BLOG

You see a lot of ads for popular products no matter where you go on the net or even offline. This type of advertising is solution oriented: you are acutely aware of the problem and are even familiar with it, so much so that you would actually know what solution you need.

Everyone is bombarded by solutions all the time. So, when one of the solutions you're seeing will fix a problem that you have, then

you're going to think "ah ha!" because now you know where to buy it.

Solution: Sleeping Pills

Your blog is all about sleeping pills of just about any brand. Your entire blog has pages and pages of sleeping pills and each one is reviewed. You would also discuss what would cause you to want to take sleeping pills.

Whereas the problem-oriented blog would feature many different types of solutions, you are focused on one solution group. There are no alternate fixes here – you don't tell people about exercises or anything else, because you want them to buy the sleeping pills you're selling.

Keyword Research Direction

You're a little bit more restricted in your domain name; you will want something specific since you're going for the solution approach.

If you are advertising specifically "Brand X Miracle Pill" that is designed for weight loss because its popularity is off the charts, then you'll want to tell people about the "Brand X Miracle Pill" somewhere in your domain.

You don't necessarily care about attracting those people who have the problem; you won't need to convince the people this solution is the best for them. Since they would be searching for the solution, they're in "buy" mode. People who are in "buy" mode tend to be easier to sell to.

IDENTIFYING THE PROFITABLE MARKETS

Arguably one of the most powerful free tools for the internet marketer, this can help you plan out your niche marketing campaign better than any other tool available.

That's because this tool can not only help you locate those special keyword and keyword phrases to use, but you can also add them directly to an AdWords campaign right from this interface.

First, you would go to:

<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>

How would you like to generate keyword ideas?	Enter one keyword or phrase per line:
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Descriptive words or phrases (e.g. green tea)	<input type="text"/>
<input type="radio"/> Website content	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use synonyms

Enter the phrases you want to search for in the appropriate box, enter the captcha, and then click the "Get Keyword Ideas" button. After doing the search, you'll notice 4 columns:

“Keywords”, “Advertiser Competition”, “Local Search Volume: <Current Month>”, and “Global Monthly Search Volume”.

The “Advertiser Competition” column shows approximate advertiser competition for the particular keyword or keyword phrase listed. These aren’t real numbers but “bar graphs” that would indicate a worded value.

The more “green” a bar is, the more competition that exists for that particular phrase. If you’re ever unsure, move your mouse cursor over the bar in question and it will tell you in the floating text.

The “Local Search Volume” and “Global Monthly Search Volume” columns give the approximate number of times the particular listed phrase has been searched for in your targeted country (local) which is set to the “United States” initially or the entire world (global).

Click “Global Monthly Search Volume” to sort by that column. You will want to find the phrases that have between 300 and 10,000 searches. Anything less than that will not really be worth your time since so few people would be searching for it so the traffic would be minimal.

Anything more than that will probably have too much competition; too many people would be trying to grab it. You’ll

have to find that spot in the middle that will be the balance between traffic and competition to make it worthwhile.

When searching, you should find a list of synonyms for your keyword. For this, you could probably search thesaurus.com and enter the more popular phrases, one line at a time. For example, if searching for “insomnia”, you’ll also want to include “sleeplessness” and “can’t sleep”.

CHOOSING YOUR DOMAIN

You should be able to find your domain name from this research, and when you do you should register it and then set up your hosting. When you have done this, you’ll be ready to go usually in a matter of minutes, but it could take up to four hours.

In order to make sure you have the best domain, here are some rules you should use when making your choice. These are all really simple ideas to follow, and can mean the difference between a really good name and a horrible name:

1. All good things end in dot COM.

Using anything other than a .com can confuse people and also degrade your professionalism. Everyone expects someone to have a .com, whether they realize it or not.

2. No numbers.

Numbers add no real value unless you're trying to go for 9/11 traffic.

3. Dashes are not necessary.

Sometimes people just can't remember the dashes, such as if your site is supposed to have them or where the dashes are. Avoid this completely.

4. Don't use extra words.

You don't want "thefatlosssite.com", but "fatloss.com". Everyone knows it's a site, and words like "the", "an", and "a" are filtered by the results anyway.

5. Be as short as possible.

Most people can't remember very much if they're not writing it down. Save people the trouble.

6. Use simple words.

You may know really complex words, but keep it simple for the general public.

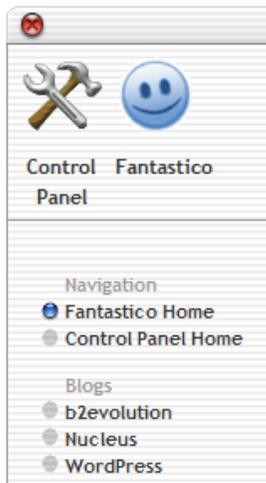
INSTALLING WORDPRESS

Simply log into your domain's control panel:

www.yourdomain.com/cpanel

There are two columns, an information column and boxes of links. Scroll down while looking at the second column (the larger

one), for the "Software/Services" box. After you find this box, click on "Fantastico De Luxe".



When the page reloads, you'll see that on the left side is Fantastico's menu; the first section after "Navigation" should be "Blogs". Click on "WordPress" to begin the installation.

The next page will show you your current installations, if you have any, and a link to install a new instance of WordPress on your server.



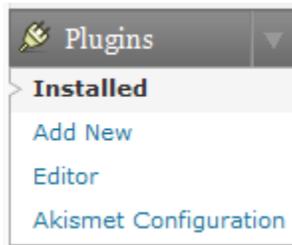
When you click "New Installation", a new screen will load showing you step 1 of 3; this screen will be the basic information step.

- You will choose the domain you want to install it on. This is done with a drop down menu box.
- You can choose a directory. Unless you want it in a directory other than the main directory, you should leave this blank.
- Enter your username and password for access to the WordPress admin on your server.
- Enter the nickname for your administrator account. This will be what the name will show whenever you make a public post.
- Enter the email address for notifications regarding this WordPress blog.
- Enter the site name, not the URL.
- Enter a description about the site.

When you're done filling in this information, click "Install WordPress". A new screen will load, confirming *where* it's going to install. Click "Finish Installation".

Finally, the last page will show you your admin username and password, and give you a link to the admin area so you can bookmark it. You also have the option to send the details to an email address which you should do.

WORDPRESS PLUGINS



One of the first things you should do with your blog is install some themes. When you go to your blog's dashboard, click the "PlugIns" link on the left column.

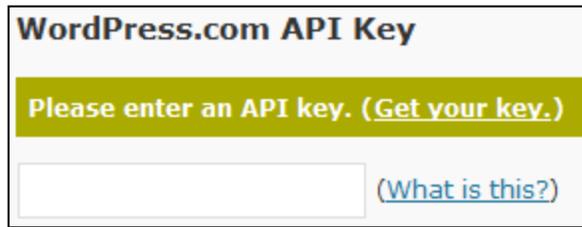
A new screen will load, and show you all of the installed plugins by default; initially there should be two: "Akismet" and "Hello Dolly". "Akismet" checks your comments against an algorithm to see if they're spam; this particular plugin is useful. "Hello Dolly" gives you quotes from the song on your admin screens.

This little box will be immensely helpful, you can add a new plugin from here, as well as edit a plugin that you've installed if you're feeling adventurous enough.

Adding a new plugin is easy, you click "Add New" and then enter the name of the plugin that you want in the search box. When I give you the name of a plugin as the heading for the subsection, it will be the exact name you will want to use as your search entry. You simply click "Install", then activate it and it's done.

YOUR API KEY

In order to use some of the enhanced features from WordPress.com to your own hosted blog, you'll have to get an API key. This is pretty much standard and unavoidable. Fortunately, it's really easy to get.

A screenshot of a web form titled "WordPress.com API Key". Below the title is a green bar with the text "Please enter an API key. (Get your key.)". Underneath is a white text input field. To the right of the input field is a blue link that says "(What is this?)".

After you sign up at WordPress.com (you don't have to sign up for a blog, you can get just a username),

there are two ways to find out your API key. From the floating menu at the top, mouse over "My Account" and click "Edit Profile" or click on the "Profile" link on the left column of the page. Your API key will be at the top of the page. After you get your key and enter it, click the "Update Options" and you're ready to go.

AKISMET

Click "activate" for "Akismet". This is one of those plugins that will require an API key but it's worth it because of the anti-spam features it has – such as automatically maintaining your blog for you.

Akismet is almost ready. You must [enter your WordPress.com API key](#) for it to work.

Click the link and the next screen will be about your API key. Enter your key and you're ready to go.

Akismet can make mistakes; it doesn't automatically ban or blacklist someone. It will store the alleged spam for 15 days before it's deleted. If it's not spam, just approve the content and it will be added.

PLATINUM SEO PACK

This will help you optimize your blog for the search engines so you don't have to worry about the finer points of SEO. It will automate the generating of SEO META tags and automatically redirect pages that have relocated (301).

Since the plugin "All in One SEO Pack" pretty much does the same thing, though not as well, you'll have to disable this plugin for Platinum SEO Pack to work, or they will end up conflicting with each other.

SIMPLE TAGS

This will simplify adding tags to your blog posts which it can do automatically, using (among other things) the Yahoo Term Extractions API which will logically pull keywords from your posts and use them for tags.

You can also use a whole lot of different management tools for tags, such as renaming, deleting, merging, searching, or editing. The interface makes it simple to even add the obligatory tag cloud you see all around the net.

GOOGLE XML SITEMAPS

Google loves sitemaps, therefore, you should have one created for it. Fortunately, this is updated automatically whenever your

site changes and the search engines are notified that support the sitemap protocol.

It makes sitemaps easy – you can prioritize pages and posts, or it can automatically calculate priority based on number of comments. Finally, it will also generate a zipped sitemap along with the XML standard.

OTHER PLUGINS

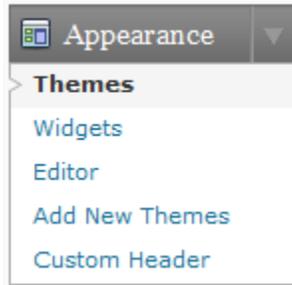
These are not the only plugins to use; this is only a guide. When you get more comfortable with your blogging, you can search for other plugins to use. Clicking on the plugins link, you can select to show the most popular plugins along with the most recently uploaded or featured plugins.

Whenever you install a plugin, check to see if it would interfere with other plugins. Usually an author would know if it would or not and would tell you, but not all the time.

If you notice anything strange happening, you can browse to your site's files and rename the plugin. It will be just like you've uninstalled it if you need to do that.

WORDPRESS THEMES

Now that you have the important stuff out of the way that most people won't ever notice, you have to install the one thing people will notice: the theme.



Just like the plugins box, there is an appearance box. You activate it by clicking the "Appearance" link on the left column. The initial screen that will load will show you the themes currently installed and ready and will allow you to change them.

To add a new theme, click "Add New Theme" and you can use the search tools to find themes based on colors, number of columns, width, features, and various subjects. When you find a theme you like, you can preview it, and then install it. To see it, you have to click the "activate" link for it.

Installing themes used to mean you'd have to download them to your computer and upload them. Now, it's as easy as installing plugins. When you click "install", it will automatically install it to your blog so you can activate it.

When finding themes, you should find one that looks professional. The important thing to keep in mind is that you should find one that would look appealing to you; if it looks good to you then usually it will look good to everyone else.

YOUR CONTENT

Now is the time to add your content to your blog; probably the most time consuming action for your blog. There are two basic ways to do this: outsourcing or authoring it yourself.

OUTSOURCING

Finding the right freelancer can make the difference between good content and content not worth reading at all. The process for finding a good freelancer is this:

1. Ask for samples. Any freelancer would be willing to give you short samples if they're worth anything. Don't expect a whole book; that's just ridiculous. You could expect them to give you an article.
2. Search for their name. Use the search engines to find out if they're a scammer.
3. Check their feedback. Most freelancing sites will have a feedback system that is user run. You should use this to your advantage.
4. Don't pay more than 50% up front. Not everyone will, but some people can take forever after getting paid. Avoid this pitfall by keeping that carrot dangling in front of them.
5. Ask for references. If they've done some work, you should be able to get a reference from them.

6. Order a small batch first. If you've gotten to this point and you're still not completely satisfied, then order a small batch which would be the least amount they would do. You can evaluate their skill here.

If you can read and understand them, then they're probably okay. But, any work that you get from them should be checked against CopyScape, which would tell you if the content is potentially plagiarized.

Lastly, the most important thing you're going to get from the freelancer is a guide which you can rewrite the way you want. If you feel you have to rewrite too much of it, then you should probably reject it and move on.

WRITING YOUR CONTENT

If you're going to write it yourself, you'll need to SEO the content, and this is what you need:

1. The title of your post should be short and contain a keyword phrase you're trying to rank for.
2. Write your content in natural speech. This means don't be repetitive and don't stuff your content full of keywords.
3. When you link to other posts or other pages, make sure they work, first of all, and also that you don't link by saying "[click here](#)". Instead, say "look at my entry about [headache](#)"

[relief](#)". That way, you'll try to rank for "headache relief" (useful) instead of "click here" (useless).

4. Use TAGS! You've installed the plugin for it, now use it.

That's pretty much it; the rest is done for you with the SEO pack that you installed earlier.

PUT YOUR BLOGS ON AUTOPILOT

Everyone loves the word "autopilot". That basically means you don't have to do anything; it's all automated. The trick is in outsourcing (or writing ahead) and autoposting inside WordPress.

From your blog's dashboard, click the "Posts" link on the left, then select "Add New". There are three columns: the standard WordPress navigation menu, the posting box column, and the publishing column.

In the publishing column, there's a line that says "Publish Immediately [Edit](#)". If you click on the edit link, you can set a specific time for it to autopublish; it'll be posted to your blog just as if you had done it manually – no one will know.

This will allow you to take the trip that you've been needing to take or attend to some emergency family business. When you get some free time, just make a couple of extra posts for those rainy days so you don't have to work every day.

In addition to automating your posts or your outsourced posts, you can also automate by feeding in content through RSS feeds. Just do a search for blogs or other RSS sources related to your blog and add their content in its special section, or even a separate page on your blog.

You're going for the traffic you'd be getting from the search engines because they'll be pinged every time your blog updates at all, which is the beauty of the whole thing.

This will pull in the visitors, giving you an endless stream of traffic. If you have constant traffic and you offer good content, your blog will get more popular.

MONETIZING YOUR BLOG

Money is always what it's about. So, make sure your blog is set up for just that. You do this by adding AdSense to your site, and also marketing affiliate products.

You know people will be interested in "buying" if they come to your product-oriented blog. But some may still be investigating even though they came to your blog.

You fix this offering a link to a product in just about every single post. If you don't give people an option to buy something, then you're wasting space.

For your problem-oriented blog, it'll be much easier. You know just about every post will have something about a product in it, so it'll be easier for you.

You can find products to advertise on sites like ClickBank or Amazon, and depending on what you wanted to sell there's also the eBay affiliate network.

Unless you have a huge network of sites, AdSense doesn't really make a whole lot of sense; but it doesn't hurt to put it in. You do this by finding the right theme that will insert AdSense code in the right places. Then you just configure by adding your AdSense ID. You'll be all set up for when your network is in full swing.

TRAFFIC FOR YOUR BLOG

There are plenty of free ways to get traffic to your site, and you should use a good mixture of a bunch of them. We've already covered SEO so I'll spare you that explanation. Here are a couple of others that will help in your traffic.

ARTICLE MARKETING

Since you're already writing articles or getting them outsourced anyway, this is a good source. You can submit to various article directories to get traffic to your site. They give you free article space while you get free traffic through a bio box.

The bio box will have a short message about you and you will be able to have usually two links, one to an article on your site and one to your site's main page.

The linking inside the bio box is really important; don't fall into the trap to let people "click here". As a general rule, you should probably link to the page by its topic.

WEB 2.0

Another set of authority sites would be those famous Web 2.0 (or user contributed content sites) such as Squidoo and HubPages. You can quickly and easily create a "site" on their site, and using their ranking, you can link to your site. Squidoo is pretty conservative on linking, while HubPages isn't, but HubPages is more open about its topics.

Be warned, though, these sites are user moderated, and if they feel your site is spammy, you will get reported and your presence on the Web 2.0 sites will be deleted.

OTHER TRAFFIC METHODS

You can get into other methods for your traffic, such as link, banner, or traffic exchanges and even Pay per Click. You can also purchase traffic directly.

While I have stated before that you should be willing to give up some cash, to ask that you give up hundreds of dollars on a relatively new blog won't accomplish anything.

Pay per Click is a potentially dangerous game and requires some serious planning for it to be done correctly, so you should read up on that before trying it.

CONCLUSION

I told you blogging was easy. You learned it all here in this book, from how to set it up, customize it, SEO it, and get traffic to it. If you spent just an hour per day writing some content and posting it to your blog, you will find that revenue stream you've been looking for.

Depending on the popularity of your topics, this really could happen within a week. But by the same token, you shouldn't expect a poorly designed blog to do much of anything.

Always keep your content looking and reading really well. This can't be stressed enough – the search engines check all sites through an algorithm they have that puts professional sites like CNN or Amazon as the baseline. And, how you compare to these sites will determine how “professional” you are.

This is done in a way that isn't prejudiced to anything except poor planning, and I've already told you how to avoid that. Good Luck!