

“The Only Guide You Will Ever Need To Build Your First Blog”

2011



By: Ian Tomlinson

General Disclaimer

Although every attempt was made in the writing of this ebook to provide the most helpful, in-depth advice as possible, neither I Ian Tomlinson, nor the company I represent (Soul healer websites), can or will guarantee that you will be successful in any way after reading this material. Individual results will be determined by the individual's ability to comprehend the material and take action on what is explained therein.

Product Support

Please direct all questions, complaints, compliments, testimonials and any other inquiries you may have in regards to this product to *ian@soulhealerwebsite.com* I strive to reply to all emails within 48 hours, but in certain circumstances I may require longer.

Table of Contents

- Disclaimer 2**
- Introduction 4**
- Choosing your Blogging Platform 5**
- Getting Started 7**
 - Choosing a domain*
 - Installation*
 - Trackbacks & Pingbacks*
 - Installing your Theme*
 - RSS Feeds*
 - Pinging*
- Useful Resources 26**

Introduction

It is said that a new weblog (blog) is created every second of every minute of every hour of every day. Everyone from large Corporations and small businesses, to your average Joe are using blogs these days to get their message out. Although this information seems a little intimidating, it's relatively easy to reach the top 10% within your niche and it's not extremely difficult to reach the top 1%.

My name is Ian Tomlinson. I am a Psychotherapist and Educator working in Manchester, England. I also build websites and help therapists market themselves online. I learnt to do all of this my teaching myself! Here's how the process works. Read, do, fail, read some more, have a go, fail, read some more, interact with people who know, do, fail, scratch head, try something different, fail, try again, read, have some success, build on it, read, check things out with those who know, have more success, build on it – ta da!!! Successful website set up and pulling in clients.

I'm writing this ebook to cut out a lot of that hard work and failure bit for you. If I had a guide like this when I started then it would have massively speeded up the process for me. I also wanted to make this ebook free because I believe in Karma! Give and you will receive. I'll make no bones about it. I have put affiliate links into the book that, if you buy products or services through them I will make a small profit. It won't cost you a penny more. If you are happy to do that then I thank you very much for showing me the support. If you don't want to do that, that's cool too. I also promise you that every product or service I recommend I use myself and I know will help the creation of your website more simple and result in a much better looking and performing site.

“The Only Guide You Will Ever Need To Build Your First Blog” will teach you absolutely everything there is to know about creating and maintaining a successful blog, so grab a cup of coffee, print it out, relax and get ready to start your own profitable blog.

Choosing your Blogging Platform

Choosing the software in which your blog will run is extremely important. If you choose the wrong one you will be missing out on a great deal of useful features and it will be a nightmare to switch over to another once your blog is established. You basically have 3 options; [WordPress](#), [TypePad](#) or [Blogger](#).

Each platform offers two different options to use their software. You can host it on your own domain or you can get a free blog and they will host it. The quickest and easiest option is obviously to get a free blog that is hosted by them. However, I HIGHLY recommend that you host it on your own domain. Here are a few good reasons for that:

1. You have complete control over your blog. No one can suspend your account etc. It's your blog, you're just using their software!
2. If you ever decide to sell your blog, you're out of luck if you're not hosting it on your own domain ... you don't own it so you can't sell it!
3. Are people really going to take you serious if you're using a free blog that you're not even hosting yourself? You may lose credibility, as many people may think you're not serious enough about your own blog.
4. Free blogging platforms restrict you from accessing files like the .htaccess file, which is a very important file to control when your blog becomes popular!

If you're going to make a serious effort at this, you should pay £30 or so each year for your own domain. As harsh as this may sound you should stop reading this ebook right now if hosting your blog on its own domain is too big of a step for you.

All 3 platforms are very good, but one stands out [WordPress](http://www.wordpress.org/) (<http://www.wordpress.org/>) The reason WordPress is so incredibly popular and effective is because it allows you to easily install plugins. There are LOADS of plugins that will do just about anything you

want and most of them are free.

I go into detail about WordPress plugins further on down the page, but I wanted to be clear as to why WordPress is so much better. I highly recommend WordPress and that's the software I'll be referring to throughout this ebook.

Here are some reasons why I think WordPress is better than the rest:

It's Free (always good).

It's massive – WordPress has a huge community behind it that produces free themes (front end part of you website that everyone can see) and plugins (small programs that carry out a specific function like a secure contact box, or an affiliate link to amazon) that make your website fantastic.

It's user friendly – if you have some familiarity with computers you should have little problem building a website that looks great and that ranks well on the Google search engine.

It looks great! WordPress has loads of themes that stand out from the crowd. You also have many options on some themes to customise your site to get it looking how you want it to.

Getting Started

Step 1 – Buy a domain name

The domain name (or URL) is the address that all websites have. It's what makes them unique. You can buy a domain name from hundreds of sellers. I have always used domainmonster.com because they are efficient, have great prices and have a very simple control panel to allow you to use your domain name effectively.

Many host servers offer a free domain name when you buy server space with them. If you want to you can do this rather buy one separately. I personally like to have full control over my domain name so I leave it sat with domain monster and just point it at my server – easy to do and flexible for me if I want to change servers too.

Choosing a domain - There are a few things you need to think of when choosing a domain. If the possibility of selling your blog at some point in the future is there, you don't want to use your actual name or brand in the domain name (i.e. johndoe.com) Instead, think of a good keyword phrase to target and use that in your domain name for Search Engine Optimization (SEO) purposes.

If you are out to brand your name however, you may want to think about using your name in your URL. This is all dependent on your goal with the blog. Just keep in mind, if you use your name in your domain name, it will most likely be extremely hard to sell the blog if there ever comes a time in which you decide to do so.

The option I chose was to register my domain name and simply 301 redirect it to my blog. This way I won't lose the traffic from direct visitors of my name domain and I can still sell my blog in the future if I decide to do so. I can even market my name domain if I choose and since I'm using a 301 redirect all of that "link juice" aka authority will go to the actual blog. I'm still building my "brand" as the header image has my picture and the title includes my name. When a new visitor lands on the site, he or she immediately knows that the blog belongs to me.

Here are some other tips that you need to consider when choosing your domain name:

1. **Go for the regional address** of your country if that's your target market. For example, if you are selling in the USA you need to be chasing a .com domain name. If you want to sell spanners to people in the UK then you want a .co.uk address. This is because search engines prefer regional addresses when they search, so someone searching for spanners in the UK will have the .co.uk results returned before the .com results. If you can, avoid non-specific addresses like .net or .info because Google will not know instantly where the website is targeted for and give it less prominence in the rankings.
2. Do your best to **get the purpose of your business in your name**. So if you sell spanners in Britain you need to be aiming for "qualityspanners.co.uk" or some such. You then have keywords that people will search for in your web address, moving you up the rankings.
3. **Avoid underscores**, hyphens or any other not letters in your name. These make it harder to type and harder for potential customers to remember.
4. **Keep the name sensible in length**. If it's really long then people are going to forget it or type it wrongly and not find you as easily.
5. **Make it easy to remember** and **avoid words that are difficult to spell**. People will forget it or type it into the address bar wrong you've just lost a customer! Take it from me, the owner of <http://manchesterpsychotherapy.net> , that this is good advice. I had to teach myself how to spell psychotherapy, and I can see the myriad of variations of the spellings of the word that show up on my search information that lots of people haven't got a clue either. Manchestercounselling.com would have been a much better bet, but it had already gone

Have a think about what names you would like to have and type them into the search

web address part of domain monster. You can quickly find out whether the address is available in the format you want. If you want .co.uk and .com is available then think of another name and get it right! My policy is to find a name that I really like and then buy .com and .co.uk of that name. I then redirect the .com address to my .co.uk address so if someone makes a mistake when typing in the address in makes no difference – they still end up finding my site.

Your turn to get stuck in!

- If you want to use domainmonster to buy your domain name then I would ask you [to click on the link on my website](#) to take you to it. I've made this guide free so I guess I'm asking for a favour from you. If you go to the [site via my link](#) I'll make a small profit and you will pay the same amount. To do this, [click here](#) to take you to my website and simply click on the flashing monster in the side bar – see, even saves you typing!

You don't, of course, have to buy your domain name through domainmonster. I recommend them because they have excellent prices and they make it very easy to manage your domain name. The rest of this guide will be presuming you are using domain monster, but it should be easy to do the same with whatever seller you have registered your name to.

- Think of a good name for your business that fits with the criteria mentioned above.
- Buy that name.

Tomo's insider tip!! If you can afford it (and, let's face it, it's not all that expensive!) buy the name for at least 2 years. This is because **Google likes names registered for longer than a year**. It shows commitment to your site and proves you are not a spam website that will do evil things and then disappear never to be seen again.

Well done! You are now a proud owner of your very own domain name!

Stage 2 – Buy server space.

You have an address, now all you need is a “house” to attach it to. Buying server space these days is easy and cheap. You can set up a website for a year for under £50 if you play your cards right. The server is the big lump of computer sat in a building somewhere that your website “lives” on.

Tomo’s insider tip!! It’s always best to buy server space in the country you see yourself doing most business in. If you are selling in the UK, buy server space from servers that are actually in the UK. Likewise, if you are going to mainly target a US audience, then buy server space from a US based server. Why? Usual reason! Google likes it. It will search UK servers for UK based inquires and US servers for US based inquiries. You want to take every advantage you can to get you up that Google ranking.

To run WordPress you are best off with a Linux based site that has PHP5.

My recommendation for servers are as follows:

UK based server webhosting.uk . This is the webhost that all my websites are on. They are cheap, efficient and easy to use. They also give great support that helped me no end when I first wanted to put my site up and had no idea how to do it (you should avoid that problem cos you got this guide to explain all). They give online support 24 hours a day and I have found this much more efficient than the telephone service which does keep you waiting a while.

US based server hostmonster.com. Once more, these guys offer you a great deal and are excellent value for money. They have top notch customer service and will supply you with everything you need even with the budget package. Installing WordPress is as easy as clicking a button – no faffing around with uploading files or any of that nonsense!

Get stuck in!

- Choose the server that best suits your market, click on the link above to take you to the website and buy the cheapest Linux package you can get. They all fulfill the requirements you have of a server so it’s pretty impossible to go wrong. If you get super enthusiastic at this web building malarkey then you can upgrade your account later – but that’s probably a long way down the line for you (I host 4 sites on my UK based server and have barely used a quarter of my capacity).

Step 3 – point your domain name at your host server and install WordPress.

This is a two stage process:


Before you carry out this step, you need the FQDN (fully qualified domain name) for your server. This is an entire domain name address, including hostname, domain name and top-level domain that your server will be able to provide for you.


Stage 1 – on domainmonster or wherever you bought your domain name from:

1. Go into your domainmonster account and find your domain name on the right hand side. Highlight it by clicking on it.
2. Click “manage”.
3. Type in the DNS information into the third box down named “third party name servers”. Make sure the radial button is clicked too.

Manage Name Servers

Members Area > soulhealerwebsites.com Control Panel
> Manage Name Servers

 Manage Name Servers (Manage your domains name servers.)

 Manage Glue Records (Set up glue records for your domain)

This page allows you to set the [name server](#) for your domain. Be aware that changes to your name servers will affect the operation of your domain, including websites, email and any other related services.

Use Domainmonster.com Name Servers

Using the Domainmonster.com Name Servers allows you to use our [DNS Management](#), [Email Forwarding](#), [Web Forwarding](#) and [POP3 Email services](#).

Primary:* ns1.domainmonster.com
Secondary:* ns2.domainmonster.com
Tertiary: ns3.domainmonster.com
Quaternary:

Use 3rd Party Name Servers

Select this option if you wish to use a set of [3rd Party](#) name servers. Enter the [FQDN](#) of each of the servers in the boxes below; you must provide at least Primary and Secondary name servers. Do not enter any of the Domainmonster.com name servers as they will not work here.

Primary:*
Secondary:*
Tertiary:
Quaternary:

Name Servers Based Upon This Domain (Glue Records)

You do not have any [Glue Records](#) for soulhealerwebsites.com currently set up. You will need to set some up on the [Manage Glue Records](#) page.

Select this option if you wish to use use name servers based upon soulhealerwebsites.com itself. Pick the [Glue Records](#) for soulhealerwebsites.com from the lists below. See [Manage Glue Records](#) to modify these lists. You must

Stage 2 – on your host server. Log into the control panel of your server. It will ask for the domain name of your site. Type it in, choose a password, let it fill in all the other stuff automatically for you and you're done.

Now go chill for a day – yep, you read that right. It can take up to 24 hours for your domain name and your server to link. If you have installed WordPress then when your site is up and running when you see your site up with a simple WordPress theme you are ready to go. Until it's ready you will get all sorts of screens telling you the link is broken etc etc. Don't let this bother you and give it time. The first time I made a website it totally freaked me out and I couldn't understand what I had done wrong. The answer was that I hadn't done anything wrong, it just took time.

Installation - Installing WordPress is very easy. If your hosting provider offers Fantastico it's absolutely effortless. If not, you'll have to do a manual installation, which is pretty easy as well.

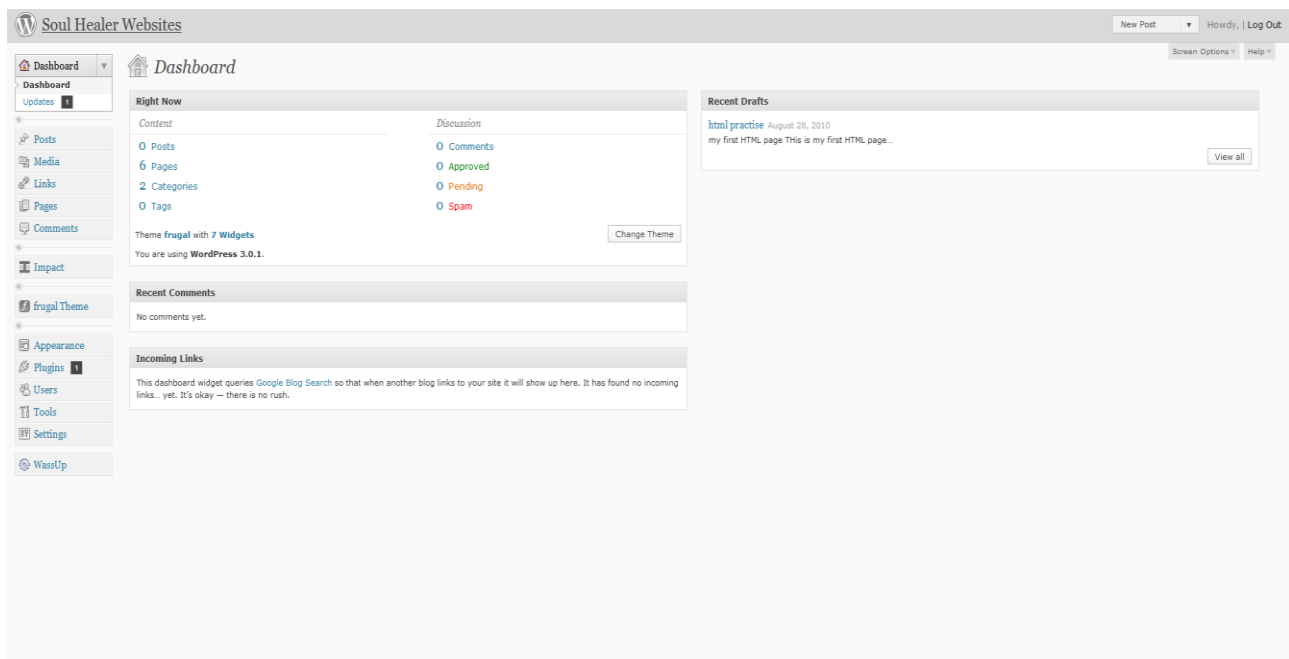
Installing with Fantastico – This is very simple. If you're not sure whether or not your webhost provides fantastico, give them a call and ask. If they do, you should see a small icon called “fantastico” once you login to your hosting account. Just click on that and under “blogs” you should see “wordpress.” Once you're there you will just need to define a directory if you're installing into a subdirectory (ie. Yoursite.com/blog and not the root folder ie. Yourblog.com) Insert an admin nickname and password as well as an email address. If you want to use the “blog by email” function you'll need to insert some info about your email account. This function allows you to post to your blog by simply sending an email. This is not mandatory; I've actually never used it. Once you've filled in all the info, click “install wordpress” and your blog is now installed.

Manual Installation – [Download the zip file](#) and extract its contents. Once you have the files, use their “[famous 5-minute installation guide](#).”

You are now up and running! You got a blog – hurrah! The rest of the guide gives a bit of info on how to use your new blog.

Getting around the admin panel - Once everything is up and running you can login to your blog by going to yourblog.com/wp-login.php or yoursite.com/blog/wp-login.php if you installed in a subdirectory. Your admin panel should look something like this:

note: It may look different, depending on the version of WordPress that is currently out.



The image on the previous page is of the first screen you will see when logged in to WordPress, it's called the "Dashboard." As you can see, there is a list of links to the left (basically your control panel,) a list of incoming links to the right (will obviously be empty if you just installed WordPress) an area where you can make a quick post (QuickPress) below the incoming links, some stats and the recent comments made to your blog posts, which will also be blank at first, obviously.



You can basically ignore everything except for the column of links on the left side of your screen for now, which are basically your command and control links. This column is where you control everything.

As you can see, the first link is "Posts" and if you expand it (click on the arrow to the right) you'll see there are four options under it:

Edit – This is where you can edit posts that you've previously written.

Add New – This is where you can write a new blog post.

Tags – This is where you can manage tags. Tags are basically separate landing pages, which target very long-tail phrases. I am personally not a big fan of tags and I do not use them, this is optional.

Categories – This is where you can manage the categories in which your posts will fall under. If you make a category it will not appear on your blog until at least one post is assigned to it. Every post must be assigned to a category from within the "Add New" section.

Now let's skip the "Media" link and the "Links" link for now and get into pages. The reason I want to skip them for now is because I want to explain the difference between "posts" and "pages" while posts are fresh on your mind.

As you can see, the fourth link down is “Pages.” Posts and Pages are two different things. A post is your normal blog post that will work its way down the page as you write new posts and is part of your ongoing musings, while a page is “static” and will remain linked to on the front page and every other page in the sidebar, or wherever your theme places links to pages (more on themes later,) and is not necessarily part of your ongoing musings. A good example of a page would be “About us” or “Contact.” You can also include articles that would contribute to the overall theme of your blog.

You'll want to create an “about me” page and a “contact me” page right away, as it's very important for credibility purposes, as your readers need to have the ability to learn a little about you right away and to also contact you for any reason. Don't worry; any posts/pages you create now will still be there when you install your theme in a few minutes.

Now that we've cleared that up, let's go back up to the “Media” link. This is very quick and easy. This is where you can quite simply upload images, videos and/or music from your computer to use on your blog. Just click “Add New” and it's basically self-explanatory from there.

Next we have the “Links” link. This is where you can add a link to other blogs that you follow and/or sites that you just enjoy. This could be sites that you own or sites that you just like. It really doesn't matter. You can link to any site you want here and it will be displayed on your blog, usually in the sidebar and usually titled “Blogroll” but the location and name will be determined by the theme you choose.

Since we already went over pages, we'll skip that link now and move on to the “Comments” link. Once again, this is pretty self-explanatory. Here you can manage all comments left by readers on your blog posts. You can edit them, delete them, approve them, deny them etc.

Next is the “Appearance” link. When you upload new themes, this is where they will appear. As soon as you upload a new theme, it will appear here, but it will not become

active until you click on it in this screen. You can have as many themes as you like in there and to switch between installed themes all you have to do is click on the one you want to display.

You can also modify the themes by clicking on the link in the drop down menu titled “editor.” This is where you'll add to or take away from the sidebar(s) etc. You can also do it through your own ftp client or html editor, but this is a quick and easy way to do it. Just select the file you want to edit and the raw code will be displayed, very easy.

I'll show you exactly where to find themes for free later on, now I want to continue the “walk-through” of the admin panel. Just know that once you do select a theme, which we'll go over later, this is where you'll go to activate it and/or edit it.

The next link is “plugins.” A plugin is simply a file or folder, created by developers, that does a specified action. There are plugins out there that will do just about anything to your blog that you want. In this section you can activate, deactivate and edit your plugins.

Each plugin that you upload will display here. A newly uploaded plugin will not work until you activate it here. It displays the name and description of the plugin followed by the “activate” or “deactivate” option and there is also an editor for those of you who are code junkies and like to modify things to your liking.

This is also where you will modify the options of some plugins. Whether or not the options will appear here under “Plugins” or elsewhere will depend on how the plugin creator set up their plugin to work.

As I mentioned above when explaining the “Appearance” section, I'll go into where to find plugins and what plugins I recommend later on in the ebook. Right now I just want to continue the walkthrough of the admin panel.

The next link is “Users.” Most likely you will be the only user, but if you allow others to post to your blog (I don't recommend this unless you know them) this is where you will manage their details. There is also a link in the dropdown menu titled “your profile.” Some themes, such as Cleaker, draw information from your profile to display in the sidebar so it's important to fill this in with good information.

Next is the “Tools” link. This is where those who started blogging on a different platform can import their posts etc. It looks easy, but it's a paid. You don't have to worry about that though because you're starting off with the best platform!

This is also where you upgrade your WordPress installation, as WordPress comes out with a new version very frequently.

You will also see the options for some plugins here. You'll notice after time that some plugin developers will put their plugins options in here, others will put them under settings and others will actually appear in the main configuration column.

And last, but not least is the “Settings link. This is where you can set important things like the title of your blog, subtitle (tagline) email address etc. so WordPress knows what to display. In the dropdown menu you'll see 8 different links:

General – Here you can change the title of your blog, the description (tagline) and your admin email address.

Writing – Here you can change little things like the default category, but there is also one very important thing here, which is the “Update Services.” This is where you add URL's to all services that you want to alert when you publish a new blog post. I use the following list:

List of Pinging Services

<http://blogsearch.google.com/ping/RPC2>

<http://www.bloglines.com/ping>

<http://api.feedster.com/ping>

<http://api.moreover.com/ping>

<http://api.moreover.com/RPC2>

<http://blog.goo.ne.jp/XMLRPC>

<http://blogdb.jp/xmlrpc/>

<http://coreblog.org/ping/>

<http://ping.blo.gs/>

<http://ping.bloggers.jp/rpc/>

<http://ping.cocolog-nifty.com/xmlrpc>

<http://ping.syndic8.com/xmlrpc.php>

<http://ping.weblogalot.com/rpc.php>

<http://pinger.blogflux.com/rpc>

<http://rpc.blogrolling.com/pinger/>

<http://rpc.icerocket.com:10080/>

<http://rpc.pingomatic.com/>

<http://pingoat.com/goat/RPC2/>

<http://rpc.technorati.com/rpc/ping>

<http://rpc.weblogs.com/RPC2>

<http://topicexchange.com/RPC2>

<http://www.blogdigger.com/RPC2>

<http://xping.pubsub.com/ping>

<http://api.my.yahoo.com/rss/ping>

<http://ping.feedburner.com/>

<http://pingqueue.com/rpc/>

Reading – Here you can configure what will be displayed on the front page of your blog. If you want a standard blog, like most people do, you can leave this at default. The rest can be left at default as well unless you have a good reason to change it.

Discussion – Here you can change several options. These options are self-explanatory and it's up to you where you leave them at default or change them. These options should be tailored to your own comfort level. In other words, there is not “standard” when it comes to these options.

Media – Here you can change the site of images that are uploaded through the “media” option.

Privacy – This should be left as is. “I would like my blog to be visible to everyone, including search engines and archivers” should always be checked, unless this is a personal blog that you don't want the world to know about.

Permalinks – It is very important that you change this for SEO purposes. The permalink structure is the way in which URL's on your blog are structured. By default WordPress uses an extremely SEO Unfriendly structure, which looks like this:

```
http://www.yourblog.com/?p=123
```

You want the title of the post to be included in the URL, so Search Engines give that post a little more weight for those keywords. In order to do this you just need to select the “Custom Structure” option and insert the following:

```
/%category%/%postname%/
```

Once you've done that click “Save Changes” and your permalink structure will be updated to a more SEO friendly URL that looks like this

```
http://www.yourblog.com/post-category/post-title
```

Depending on whether or not your .htaccess file is writable, you may need to copy and paste some data into it once you update the permalink structure. If this is required you will be provided the data on the same page. Just copy it and paste it into your .htaccess file, which you can find in your remote folder (usually under public_html.)

Once you start posting to your blog, do not change the permalink structure. If you do, all the pages will still work, but they will no longer be indexed by the search engines, as the URL has changed and the old structure will be broken and no longer work. If you did change the permalink structure after having content already published, you would have to do 301 redirects for every single page pointing to the new page.

Miscellaneous – Here you can tell WordPress where to store files that you upload through the “Media” link.

That's the basics of your admin panel. There are a few less important features I skipped over, but you'll become familiar with them after time.

Sending and Receiving Trackbacks and Pingbacks - Blogs have a unique function in their ability to alert other bloggers when they have been linked to. These are called “trackbacks” and “Pingbacks,” both are very similar.

Unless the theme you're using separates trackbacks and pingbacks from comments, or you have a plugin installed that does so, they will appear within the comment section of a post.

In a nutshell this is what they do: If someone links to your post from their blog, a trackback or pingback will be sent to the post on your blog, which was linked to. To someone who doesn't know what a trackback or pingback is, they can appear to be a bit “spammy.” That's why it's important to understand what they look like.

When you receive a trackback or pingback it will be held for moderation if your blog is set to moderate comments (highly recommended.) If someone links to your blog post from their blog the title of their blog post, which they are linking from, will appear in the “name” field and an excerpt from the post will be inserted into the comment field.

One thing to look out for is trackback and pingback spam. Many splogs (spam blogs) will

link to loads of blog posts, with hopes of them getting approved and building links to their blog and/or gaining exposure. That's why it's very important to click on each trackback/pingback and actually read the post where they linked to you from.

Most blogs are set to automatically detect when other blogs are linking to you and to automatically send an alert when you link to another blog (Pingbacks.) But that's not always the case, depending on the technology being used of any given blog. It's always a good idea to insert the trackback link into your blog post when linking to another blog post.

To find the trackback URL, you'll need to go to the post which you are linking to. Somewhere on that page, normally after the post, there should be a "trackback" link. Just right click that link and select "save link as" in FireFox or "copy shortcut" in Internet Explorer.

Not all blogs display their trackback link and that's fine. If they don't have one don't worry about it, as their blog is most likely using Pingbacks, which will automatically detect you linking to them.

After writing a post you'll see a section below the post in your admin panel labeled "send trackbacks."

Now that you have the trackback URL copied to your clipboard, you can paste it into the trackback field for your post. If you're linking to more than one blog post, just separate the URL's with a space.

Once you publish the post the trackback will automatically be sent to the blogs in which you linked. Most people moderate their trackbacks/pingbacks so it may not show up immediately.

Choosing and Installing a WordPress Theme - Your theme is the template of your blog. However, unlike most Website templates WP themes are extremely easy to integrate. You can literally have a theme up and going on your blog 2 minutes after downloading it; it's really that easy.

First you'll need to find a theme that you like. There are hundreds, probably thousands, of WordPress themes online. Below are just a few links to get you started.

- <http://themes.wordpress.net/>
- <http://www.wpthemesfree.com/>
- <http://www.wpthemespot.com/>

Just browse through the themes and pick one that you like. Once you find a winner just download it and unzip it. Upload it to your server under wp-content/themes then login to your blog's admin panel ie. Yourblog.com/wp-login.php

Under “Appearance” you should see a new screenshot of the theme you just uploaded. Just click on that screenshot and your new theme is now installed and displaying. Be sure to leave the default theme on your server so you can simply switch back to it if you see any problems with the new theme.

The single thing that has helped me most with designing websites has been [Catalyst Theme](#) . Before I bought [Catalyst Theme](#) I was stumbling around with free themes that were not flexible enough to give me the look I wanted and I had no idea how to do the hard coding in HTML to do it myself. Catalyst Theme does away with all of that.

You can change the look of your site in a multitude of ways and get it to look exactly how you want it to without having to learn code. The result is a professional looking site created easily and with maximum flexibility. If you want a double side bar on the right, no problem, a couple of clicks of the mouse and you’ve got it. Want a row of feature boxes at the top of the page to push certain blog posts or items you are selling? Easy, just select from the menu and they’re there. The support you get from Eric and Seth who run [Catalyst theme](#) is second to none. It even goes so far as when you can’t

do something yourself they will log in as you and do it for you – cool or what? If you are interested in buying Catalyst I would kindly ask you [to buy through this affiliate link](#). My site <http://manchesterpsychotherapy.net> is built using Catalyst.

Impact is a template builder similar to Catalyst and produced by the same guys. It allows pages to be built quickly in any style and colour you want without any knowledge of coding. Again, I would kindly ask you [to buy Impact through this link](#) and help keep this ebook free.



Your RSS Feed - RSS (Rich Site Summary or Really Simple Syndication) is a relatively new technology that plays an extremely important role in any successful blog. In a nutshell, RSS is used to share content such as news and blog posts.

Of course with its ease of sharing, there is spam, but overall it's a very useful technology. With blogs, RSS is used to update curious readers of new blog posts. More and more people are using RSS readers such as [Google Reader](#), [BlogLines](#) etc. to keep up with their favorite blogs without having to visit each one separately. I think of RSS feeds as Web 2.0 newsletters. People voluntarily subscribe to your RSS feed, as they do newsletters, and every post you make goes directly to their reader, as newsletters go straight to their email. The popular saying “the money is in the list” is correct and because of their similarity, one could say the same about RSS!

Burning your Feed on FeedBurner - [FeedBurner](#) (free) is the industry standard when it comes to publishing your RSS feed. WordPress produces a default feed ([yourblog.com/feed/](#)) but that's it. With feedburner you can track your feeds stats, get widgets and buttons etc. You can also view the total number of subscribers with a simple plugin, which I've included in the plugins section below.

“Burning” your feed is very easy. Just go to <http://www.feedburner.com/>, enter the URL to your feed ([yourblog.com/feed/](#) for WordPress) along with your UN, PW and email,

and choose your blogs title and click “activate feed.” It's that simple. Once you've burnt your feed, FeedBurner will provide you with a new feed. This is the feed you will display on your blog. Many people will find a nice looking RSS button and link it to their feedburner feed in their sidebar.

It will take some time to gain regular RSS subscribers so I don't recommend displaying the subscriber count right away. Most people, including myself, wait until they are around 100 daily subscribers before displaying that count.

WordPress Plugins - As I stated above, the main reason WordPress is far better than any other blogging platform is that there are thousands of plugins you can use to tweak your blog and make it more user friendly, SE friendly etc. Developers are constantly releasing new plugins and there is a WordPress plugin for just about anything you can think of and the best part, most are free.

Start off by browsing through all the plugins on WordPress's list at <http://codex.wordpress.org/Plugins> if they don't have a plugin that does what you want just do a google search. You're sure to find a plugin that does whatever it is you need.

Plugin installation is just as easy as theme installation. You simply download the file(s), which will normally be in a zip file. Unzip the file(s) (could be a single file or a folder) and upload it/them to your server under wp-content/plugins. Now that the plugin is uploaded, login to your admin panel and click the “plugins” link. The plugin should now appear there with a short description and the option to “activate.”

Some plugins are good to go after you activate them, but some are not. It all depends on what the plugin does. For instance, if the plugin you're installing displays something in your sidebar or in posts, you'll most likely need to paste some code wherever you want it to display. Just be sure to read the instructions, which should be provided with each plugin, thoroughly before installing and you should be told exactly what to do.

Recommended Plugins - The following are plugins that I use and highly recommend!

- [Sociable](#) - Sociable provides a list, of which you choose, of social bookmark sites at the end up each post.
- [Subscribe to Comments](#) - This nifty plugin was created by Mark Jaquith. It inserts a little box after the reply field of each of your posts, which when ticked will send an email reply to each commenter when a reply is made. I definitely saw a rise in participation when I started using this one and I always use it when participating in other blogs that offer it.
- [Related Posts](#) - This plugin created by Alexander Malov & Mike Lu adds a list of related posts at the end of each post or in your sidebar, anywhere you want it really. Great for deeper linking and internal link attribution. It's also useful to readers, which is the most important thing!
- [Popularity Contest](#) - This plugin created by Alex King puts a percentage rating on each post, which is calculated by several factors of which you can adjust to your liking. You can also paste a small code into your sidebar and display the most popular posts. This is a great feature to guide your users to content that others liked. It's also another great way to get the SE spiders deeper into your blog.
- [HomePage Excerpts](#) - This plugin will show only a teaser of each post you make, causing your index to be much more user friendly and easy to navigate. It's also great in reducing the amount of duplicate content WordPress blogs create.
- [Akismet](#) – This is one of the most popular anti-spam plugins out there. It's effective in blocking 99% of all spam from my own experience. Unfortunately, it does block some good comments as well. But it has the option of checking those comments that were blocked so as long as you do that, you're good to go and spam free.

Useful Resources

Domain registration:

I use domain monster. You can find them easily by [clicking this link](#) that will take you to my homepage, and then just click on the big orange monster!!

Webhosts:

[Webhosting uk](#) Cheap, cheerful and helpful UK based server that uses CPanel for easy WordPress instillation.

[Hostmonster.com](#) US based server that will do everything you need it to do cheaply and allow you to install WordPress on a click of a button.

WordPress Themes and Tools

[Catalyst Theme](#) You have to pay for this theme but it's so flexible you can make your website look exactly how you want it to look. It also has great support from Eric and Seth (developers) to the point that if you are really stuck they will go onto your website and fix it themselves!

[Impact page builder](#) This plugin allows you to design your webpage layout any way you like it. Very flexible, super easy and great support.



I honestly hope that this ebook was exactly what you needed in order to get your first blog going, and more importantly, doing it correctly.

As you can see, creating a blog is much different than creating and marketing a static site. Hopefully you've saved yourself countless hours learning the hard way by downloading this ebook.

To your Blogging Success,

Ian Tomlinson

[Soulhealer Websites](#)

]