



WordPress

Looking after your self-hosted blog

20 REASONS

TO LOVE WORDPRESS



IT'S EASY
TO LEARN



THERE'S NO NEED
TO EDIT CODE



A COMMUNITY
BUILT IT AND
KEEPS IT GOING



YOU CAN INSTALL
IT IN FIVE MINUTES



SEARCH ENGINES
LOVE IT



IT'S GREAT FOR
MOBILE PHONES



THERE'S ALWAYS
SOMEONE TO HELP
WITH PROBLEMS



YOU CAN USE
PLUGINS TO DO
LOTS MORE



WORDPRESS
SOMETHING
ELSE

OVER 25% OF ALL
WEBSITES USE IT



IT DOES A LOT MORE
THAN JUST BLOGGING



YOU DON'T NEED
AN EXPERT TO
UPDATE YOUR SITE



THERE ARE MANY
BRILLIANT
FREE THEMES



YOU CAN UPDATE
YOUR SITE
FROM ANYWHERE



PEOPLE CAN
COMMENT
AND INTERACT



YOUR DATA IS
ON A SITE
YOU OWN



IT'S GREAT FOR
PICTURES, AUDIO
AND VIDEO



IT UPDATES
AUTOMATICALLY
FOR SECURITY



YOU CAN HAVE
MULTIPLE USERS



YOU CAN IMPRESS
YOUR FRIENDS WITH
A BEAUTIFUL WEBSITE



IT'S FREE

@davewalker / idaveaalker.com



Quick tips to improve blog appearance

Time to spring clean



- ★ Tidy things up & throw the stuff you don't need away!
- ★ Make it easy for visitors to:
 - ★ Find you on social media
 - ★ Search your blog, find previous posts, reviews, etc
 - ★ Subscribe to your new posts (Bloglovin, email & RSS)
 - ★ Contact you - a page with a form, email address
 - ★ Find out about you - keep about page/widget updated
- ★ Organise your tags & categories

Tags & Categories: "Term Management Tools" plugin lets you merge both tags & categories, convert tag<-->category, and set parent categories.

Categories are broad terms, like "review" and tags are specific like "brand name".

Looking good!



- ★ K.I.S.S. - Keep It Simple, Stupid!
 - ★ Don't use too many colours or fonts
 - ★ Make sure it's a readable font size & colour
 - ★ Don't overdo the ads, or the annoying pop-ups
 - ★ Take design cues from your header
 - ★ Whitespace can be good - decrease clutter
 - ★ Centred text often looks untidy & is harder to read
- ★ Make sure you are mobile friendly
 - ★ Use a responsive theme

Pop up ads, things that float like share bars - often these are hard to dismiss or obscure things when viewing a site on a mobile device.

Most modern themes are responsive, though there are mobile theme plugins (also a jetpack module) - but they are often not as attractive.

Widgets, widgets, and more widgets



- ★ Get rid of widgets you don't need.
- ★ Brand/ambassador widgets:
 - ★ Delete old ones
 - ★ Condense the rest into a slideshow using a plugin
- ★ Use Widget Visibility to control where they appear
- ★ Move the least important widgets to the footer
- ★ Keep the styling consistent: if some images/badges are centred, centre them all!

"Slideshow" is a good plugin for making badge slideshows to use in your sidebar.

Widget Visibility - plugin/jetpack module, I use it to make the Tried & Tested badge appear in the sidebar on all of my reviews.

Free SEO e-book



★ bit.ly/HeartSEO

Heart Internet have produced a guide on SEO for WordPress with some useful info. I picked one up at WordCamp but you can download it from their website as an e-book.



Speed things up

Optimise your site



- ★ Sort your plugins & remove dead weight
- ★ Reduce number of posts on home page
- ★ Images
 - ★ Set "large" to match your post content width
 - ★ Compress images with a plugin
- ★ Caching tools
- ★ Google PageSpeed Insights, GTMetrix, Pingdom Tools
- ★ Leverage browser caching
- ★ Enable GZIP compression

Change how many posts appear on your homepage in the "Readings" settings page.

Image compression plugins: "Compress JPEG & PNG images" by TinyPNG, "ShortPixel Image Optimiser", or "WP Smush"

Page speed tools - but don't obsess over rankings:

<https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>

<https://gtmetrix.com>

<https://tools.pingdom.com>

Free speed optimisation e-book



★ bit.ly/SitegroundSpeed

Siteground have produced a free e-book about speeding up your WordPress installation, explaining some of the suggestions I made in the previous slide in more detail, and more.

Optimisation plugins



- ★ WP-Optimize
- ★ P3 (Plugin Performance Profiler)
- ★ Autoptimize
- ★ Async JavaScript
- ★ Google Webfont Optimizer
- ★ Remove Query String From CSS & Javascript in WordPress
- ★ Heartbeat Control

WP-Optimise keeps database slim by deleting old post revisions & other unnecessary data, optimises the tables. It can be scheduled to run on a regular basis, and you can specify for it to keep X weeks of data each time.

P3 can help you work out which plugins are causing your site to run slowly.

Get rid of plugins that duplicate functionality or that are no longer required

Caching: WP Super Cache plugin, some hosts offer caching through control panel



Site security

Keep things secure



- ★ iThemes Security & WordFence plugins
- ★ Use secure passwords
- ★ Two factor authentication (Duo)
- ★ Don't use "admin" or user ID 1
- ★ Gauntlet - scan site & follow instructions
- ★ Keep EVERYTHING updated - Easy Updates Manager
- ★ Delete unused plugins & themes
- ★ Replace abandoned plugins
- ★ Quttera Web Malware Scanner
- ★ Vulnerability Alerts & Simple History

iThemes Security can make it easier to follow Gauntlet's instructions as it has tools for things like changing the admin username and ID number, and so on. You can also use it to mask your login page with a different address.

Duo two factor authentication has a free plan where you can have up to 10 users, and use a mobile app with push notifications for approving login.

Quttera is a good scanner for malware problems, I tend to leave it deactivated and only activate & scan if I suspect there is a problem. Use the internal scanner tool.

Vulnerability Alerts will let you know if any of your plugins/themes are flagged as insecure.

Backup your data



- ★ Free / low cost options
 - ★ UpdraftPlus, BackWPup
 - ★ Dropbox, Google Drive, Amazon S3
- ★ Jetpack / VaultPress
 - ★ Very easy to use
 - ★ Personal option now just \$39/year
- ★ Manual
 - ★ Export data, keep local copy of WP-content via ftp
 - ★ Set a reminder

Dropbox & Google Drive both have free options but space is limited unless you pay which can be costly. Amazon S3 is a low cost solution (I pay less than £1 a month) but more complex to set up.

Vaultpress/Jetpack Personal previously \$99, now down to \$39 (or \$3.50 a month). Very easy and offers one-click restore. Keeps 30 days of backups & you get priority support too. For the next package up they will scan your files for you daily for malware etc.

Manual export of data: control panel for database, plugins to export database, XML WordPress export.



Let's Encrypt

Eventual treatment of all HTTP pages in Chrome:

 Not secure example.com

SSL - https



- ★ Let's Encrypt - free!
- ★ Available on a wide range of hosts
- ★ Not scary, or super difficult
- ★ Can speed up site loading
- ★ Good for SEO, Chrome users, and your own security
- ★ Tutorial on the Blog On blog:
 - ★ bit.ly/SSLBlogOn
 - ★ Better Search Replace, & WP Force HTTPS plugins

Let's Encrypt is a "free, automated and open certificate authority" who issue free SSL certificates, in a move hoped to improve internet security. The certificates expire after 90 days and are almost always reissued automatically.

Better Search Replace is a WordPress plugin that let you find & replace your old http URL with your new https URL in the database. You can also use the [interconnect/it Search Replace DB tool](#). Both these replace the data without damaging "serialised strings" - a non-safe replacement can have effects such as resetting your widgets back to default.

WP Force HTTPS redirects all users who visit a http page on your site to the https equivalent, with a 301 redirect. You can also do this with a htaccess rule in your root directory.



Plugins

Some useful plugins



- ★ Advanced WPLink
- ★ Google Analytics by Monster Insights
- ★ Remove Widget Titles
- ★ Yoast SEO
 - ★ AMP
 - ★ Glue for Yoast SEO & AMP
- ★ YouTube Channel
- ★ YouTube Information Widget

Advanced WPLink - replaces Ultimate Nofollow, has more options like disabling the inline link tool, going straight to pop up when you click link

Google Analytics by Monster Insights - as well as putting in your tracking code it integrates a dashboard into your WP admin

Remove Widget Titles - Lets you set hidden widget titles by starting them with ! In the admin menu

Yoast SEO - one of the most popular SEO plugins, this has a wide range of tools & improves your site's SEO (even if you ignore the traffic lights)

AMP, and Glue for Yoast SEO & AMP - Accelerated Mobile Pages project, making mobile-friendly super quick loading versions of your posts which Google then serves in results on mobile. bit.ly/YoastAMP

YouTube Channel & YouTube Information Widget - both let you display a sidebar widget with videos from your channel, plus a channel link.

Some useful plugins



- ★ Instant Images
- ★ Advanced Excerpt
- ★ Subtitles
- ★ Simple Download Monitor
- ★ WP Retina 2x
- ★ WP-DraftsForFriends
- ★ Editorial Calendar

Instant Images - lets you browse and add Unsplash images (free high quality stock photos) into your media library, right from WP admin.

Advanced Excerpt - Gives you more control over your post excerpt on the home page, including allowing HTML, changing the length, etc.

Subtitles - Lets you add subtitles to posts & pages.

Simple Download Monitor - Great for downloadable files like free printables - creates a nice description box with download button, thumbnail, and counts downloads.

WP Retina 2x - Lets you serve retina images to retina screens - like iPhones & macs. Makes your images pretty & crisp on nice screens.

WP-DraftsForFriends - Lets you send private links of draft posts to people.

Editorial Calendar - Lets you see, amend & add your posts, drafts etc in month view.

Jetpack

- ★ Connects to WordPress.com
- ★ It does a lot & is easy to use
- ★ Can be used without slowing your site right down
- ★ Keep it in check
- ★ Get to know it - [Jetpack.com](https://jetpack.com)
- ★ Disable any modules you don't use
- ★ Don't duplicate functionality with other plugins - disable the plugin... or module



I use Jetpack on Mama Geek and still manage to get a page speed score of 93/100

Modules I use & like include: Publicize, Sharing, Related Posts, Subscriptions, Stats, Widget Visibility, Monitor.

There are plenty of modules often enabled by default that you can turn off if you don't use them, such as Beautiful Math (uses LaTeX to display equations nicely), Custom Content Types, Extra Sidebar Widgets, Gravatar Hovercards, Infinite Scroll, and so on.



Any Questions?

Download these slides at: bit.ly/BlogOn17

@zoecorkhill

hello@zoecorkhill.co.uk

zoecorkhill.co.uk & mamageek.co.uk