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# What Every Site Owner Should Know

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*MaAnna Stephenson*

# What Every Site Owner Should Know

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Rev 2

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- [Free Reports](#) – on how to backup your site and so much more
- [Resource List](#) – the apps, plugins, site hack specialists I recommend
- [Site Owner Starter Guide](#) – links to popular posts and video tips

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# Introduction

Whether you're new to site ownership or have been running one for years, this book will help you make the most of it while avoiding expensive pitfalls.

Each topic could easily be a book of its own.

This is an overview that highlights the most important aspects of each topic that will build your confidence to make good decisions about your site. It's filled with links for more in-depth reading too, so you can deep dive on what you need to know more about.

There's a lot of hype online that uses gimmicks and hooks to make you believe site ownership is easy and you'll get rich quick.

**I live in the real world**, and that's what I teach via tutorials and classes, blog posts and videos, day in and day out. I'm making an honest living online and I show others how to do that with their sites too.

**I know all about limited budgets of both time and money**. That's why I make so much info like this book and webinars either free or inexpensive.

**I also create training that is to the point**, so you can get the info you need without wasting time looking all over the web and YouTube for the best info.

**No hype. All help.**

So, let's dive in and get you on your way to becoming a successful, confident site owner.

# Domains

What you'll find in this chapter:

- Own Your Domain
- Registrars
- Different company from hosting
- www vs non www
- URL of your site
- Add on domain vs subdomain
- Pointing and transferring
- Privacy
- 2 step authentication
- Age as a ranking factor

## Own Your Domain

I **strongly** encourage you to purchase your domain yourself. Do not go through a designer or reseller for it.

Now, using an affiliate link is okay. It means that your designer or other source will earn a one-time commission from the sale.

For security, you want to be listed as the owner. You can also list your designer or webmaster as the technical contact so that they will have the authority to speak with the registrar on your behalf in case you want them to help you with support.

But, if you ever want to change designers/webmasters, then you need to own your property outright and not have to transfer ownership from them.

## Registrars

Your registrar is who you pay to manage your domain name, like [www.BlogAid.net](http://www.BlogAid.net)

Popular registrars that I use include:

- GoDaddy
- NameCheap

**The important things to look for in a registrar are service and support.**

The moment you have to make a change to your domain, like pointing it to your hosting, both service and support come into play. You'll want an easy to use interface and someone to call to walk you through the steps if necessary.

Any money you might have saved on a cut-rate registrar will be lost 10 fold if you need help.



## Different Company from Host

Many hosts offer domain registrar services as either a standalone service or part of a hosting package.

For better security, I **strongly** advise you to use a different company other than your host for your domain registrar.

If one gets hacked, the other does not.

## WWW vs Non WWW

It no longer matters which one you get.

The one you do get at the time you purchase your domain name is called the **canonical**.

My canonical is [www.blogaid.net](http://www.blogaid.net) but I advertise it all the time as just BlogAid.net. They both go to the same place. WordPress has a handy rewrite function that makes it happen automatically.

And, even though Google suggests that you register both versions with Google Webmaster Tools, with WordPress sites, you don't have to. Just register the canonical. And, that will be the one that you connect Google Analytics too, as well as all other accounts related to your site.

## URL of Your Site

The full URL of your site begins with the <http://> part. Don't leave that off when providing links to your site or any of its posts or pages.

But, from there, you can include the [www](http://www) or not.

For example:

<http://www.blogaid.net>

and

<http://blogaid.net>

will both take you to the same site.

Once you are there, if you check the URL in your browser, it will be the canonical, which is <http://www.blogaid.net>

## Add-On vs Sub-Domain vs Sub-Directory

An **add-on domain** is a another, unrelated domain that you add to your hosting account.

For example, I have blogaid.net as the primary domain on my account. Its website files are in the root of the public\_html section of my hosting account.

If I add a domain like myblogaid.net to my account, then the files for it will be in a folder labeled myblogaid.net. I can also use my carving site domain as an add-on, which is heartwoodart.com.

That's one way you can have multiple domains in one hosting account. That is no longer a good thing to do, and I'll tell you why in a moment.

You have to purchase an add-on domain from a registrar, just like you do your original domain.

You can add the add-on domain via the cPanel (control panel) of your hosting account, or ask your host to help walk you through the steps. It will create a new folder in the root directory.

A **sub-domain** is also in a sub folder in the hosting account. But, you don't have to purchase another domain from your registrar.

<http://www.training.blogaid.net> is a sub-domain. So is <http://www.webmaster.blogaid.net>

Both of these are standalone membership sites with their own WordPress installation. The advantage of this is the way Google links them to my main domain of BlogAid.net. They are all seen as one big thing to Google, which helps build the brand ranking.

A **sub-directory** is sort of like an add-on domain in that it will be created the same way, and have its own folder in the root directory. You can install a standalone site in that folder. But, it's also sort of like a sub-domain in that you don't have to purchase a new domain. The URL for a sub-directory will look like this: <http://www.blogaid.net/training/page-on-that-site> (this is a bogus link and will return a 404 if you try it).

Here's the skinny on the SEO for all of this.

Since an add-on domain is completely different from the main domain, it does not contribute to the brand ranking directly.

Both a sub-domain and sub-directory will contribute to the ranking of the main domain, and can rank themselves.

This is a hotly debated topic with plenty of folks on each side who have data to corroborate their position on it.

John Mueller from Google said both rank the same, so that's the last word on it for me, plus the proof I have from my own data.

## Pointing and Transferring

These are two different processes.

**Pointing a domain** means that at the registrar, you tell your domain where to point to where your site files are hosted.

Think of it like your house. That's where folks can find you (your site files on your host). And you give the street address (your host DNS) to the post office (the registrar) so they can send your mail there (site visitors).

You can point as many domains to a single site as you want. For example, I have BlogAid.net and BlogAid.com both pointed to the same site.

You can even point a domain to a single page on a site. For example, if I had the domain [www.siteaudits.com](http://www.siteaudits.com), I could point it to <http://www.blogaid.net/site-audits> That is called **domain forwarding**.

Pointing a domain to a new host requires propagation time. That means that it takes time for all points around the globe to get the message that your site files are hosting somewhere else.

With registrars like GoDaddy and Namecheap, the process begins within minutes and is usually finished within a few hours. With other registrars, the process could take from 12-48 hours.

There may be disruption in service to the site and especially to domain-related email during this process.

**Transferring a domain** means that you are changing domain registrars. For example, you may want to switch from GoDaddy to NameCheap.

Each registrar has their own way of doing this process and it's likely that you'll need to follow specific procedures at both. Contact your registrar for details.

The process of transfer could take from 4-7 days, but there should be little to no disruption of service to the site. Domain-related emails may experience some lag, but perhaps just a few hours, up to one day.

You cannot transfer a domain to a new registrar within 60 days of acquiring it.

## Privacy

I **strongly** suggest that you pay a little extra to get privacy put on the WhoIs record of your domain. It shows your name, street address, email address, and phone number. Unless you like spam of all kinds, delivered by every method, turn on privacy.

You may need to turn it off during the unlocking process if you transfer to another registrar.

## 2 Step Authentication

If your domain registrar offers it, I **strongly** suggest you get it for extra security. If a hacker gets a hold of your domain name, they can then point it to any site they like.

And you may have to provide several forms of ID to the registrar, including a birth certificate, to prove that you are who you say you are and the rightful owner. No kidding. An extra layer of security is a lot easier to do than all that.

And adding it is usually free.

## Age as a Ranking Factor

If a domain is brand new, and has only been purchased for one year, Google is unlikely to give it any weight in PageRank. There are just too many fly by night domains.

If you can afford to do so, on new domains, purchase for more than one year at the beginning.

After that, you can go year to year if you want because the domain has age on it. The older a domain is, the more weight it is given in the ever changing Google ranking algorithm.

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# Hosting

What you'll find in this chapter:

- Own Your Hosting
- What is Hosting?
- Shared
- MVPS and VPS
- Cloud Hosting
- Dedicated
- cPanel
- System Resources
- Multiple Domains
- WHM
- Managed WordPress Hosting
- Up time guarantees
- DDoS mitigation

**Where you host matters** - more than you may realize as a new site owner.

## Own Your Hosting

I **strongly** suggest you purchase your own hosting and do not go through a reseller. Now, using an affiliate link is fine. Your designer/developer/trusted source gets a onetime commission from the purchase. But you want to have a direct line to the vendor for support. And, if you ever want to move to a new designer/webmaster, they cannot hold your account and site hostage.

## What is Hosting?

Think of the servers at a host like a big filing cabinet. One drawer is like one server. Every file folder is a web site. And in each folder resides the individual files that make up a site.

You're given a control panel to access certain information about those files and the hosting account itself.

Each file folder (website) is only allotted a certain amount of resources. If you need more, you pay more.

## Shared

This is the least expensive type of hosting. It is also allotted the least amount of resources.

It's best for smaller sites with low traffic.

The entire server resources are shared with all sites on that server. So, a bot attack or resource hog plugins or ads can easily cause a site to be limited for resource overages.

This is why it is so important to install proper security on your site from the root of the account up, keep everything on the site updated, and protect against bad bots. It's also why you need to be careful about what plugins you use.

You don't want to have to pay for more hosting resources (a bigger account) if you don't legitimately have the site size and traffic to warrant it.

**Your account can be terminated for constant resource overages.**

## Managed VPS and VPS

This is the next step up from shared on many hosts. Resources are much higher, but more importantly, they are dedicated to your site. There may still be other site owners on the server, but each is fully protected from the other and no system resources, other than the server itself are shared.

You also have more control over software, applications, and security that are placed on the server. For example, you can country block at the server level. That can't be done on shared because a site sitting right next to yours may do business with that country.

The difference in managed versus regular VPS is that with managed, the host takes care of server maintenance, upgrades, and loading software and balancing the load. With regular VPS, you would have to do all of that. And, unless you have server administrator experience, it's best to leave it to the professionals.

Managed VPS and Managed WordPress hosting are different things. See the Managed WordPress section below for more on that service.

## Dedicated

This means you own the whole box. It's very expensive. Usually only enterprise-level sites can afford to have it. And, they generally have their own server administrator on staff.

All of the resources and security are dedicated entirely to your site. Or, some boutique host providers will rent such a box and resell hosting space on it.

## Cloud Hosting

This is becoming a popular choice. Site files and resources are allocated on demand from a large network. Amazon offers multiple services for cloud storage and cloud computing. Several hosts offer cloud servers as an option. You may experience faster speeds and less downtime with this solution.

There are also new middleman server admin companies popping up. They handle the server tech stuff while you get the benefit of cloud hosting without all the headache.

## cPanel

Many hosts have a control panel where you can access information about your hosting account and make changes to it. Many Managed WordPress hosts do not give you much access.

cPanel is the brand name of the most popular control panel. It is also the one most often featured in tutorials for how to do more things on your hosting account.

All hosts can customize the tools available in cPanel, but the most common are:

- Email
- File Manager
- AWStats
- Resource Usage
- Disk Space
- mySQL Database Wizard
- phpMyAdmin

**I would strongly suggest you have cPanel** if you don't go the Managed WordPress route. You'll need it to properly manage the parts of your account that affect both performance and security.

## Resources

You are renting more than space for files on a server from your hosting company.

Other elements you are renting include:

- CPU
- Physical Memory
- Virtual Memory
- Input/Output Processes
- Inodes
- Bandwidth
- Domains

No matter what your host advertises, all of these elements, and the disk space, have limits. Even if you're on the top level of Dedicated hosting and own your server, it still has a limit on its capacity, much like your own computer does.

If you go over the allotment, your site is limited for a short time, meaning that it is unavailable for access. That keeps your site from hogging all of the resources available on the whole server and making other sites slow.

Some hosts don't offer a resource meter for shared hosting. That makes you blind to what your site is using. Some plugins are resource hogs. You want to have a way to see, and eliminate that problem.

Some hosts do not make it easy for you to see overages. And some do not even notify you that overages are occurring.

**It's up to you to monitor your resource usage.**

Your account can be terminated for too many overages. But, it's more likely that the host will offer you an upsell to a bigger account type first.

This is why it's super important to run your site lean and clean, so it is secure, performs well, and you're not paying for any more hosting than you need. And, that's why it's important to have cPanel, and meters turned on so that you can see how many resources you are using.

Read [Stop Blaming Your Host for Overages](#) for more.

## Multiple Domains

Some hosts still advertise unlimited domains on a single account.

**Just because you can doesn't mean you should.**

When multiple sites are in the same account, they all draw from the same resources. If one of site is causing resource overages, it can be hard to sort out which one is the culprit.

Clean backups are harder to take when multiple sites are involved too.

And, it's impossible to place proper security firewalls between the sites.

The days are over for running multiple sites from a single shared account.

Instead, get a WHM account.

## WHM (Reseller Account)

A WHM account allows you to easily manage multiple cPannels. If you have multiple sites, they can each have their own cPanel installation.

This is also commonly referred to as a Reseller Account because designers can include hosting as part of their package. That practice is not as common as it used to be, and not something I recommend. Get your own hosting account.



## Managed WordPress Hosting

This is more expensive than regular hosting because it offers more services for helping keep your account and site safe and performing better. It also has more restrictions in what plugins can be used.

However, it is not an entirely hands-off solution. You will still need to do your part to help keep your site safe. They can't help you if you use weak passwords or install resource hog plugins that are not on their blacklist.

And, it's likely that you won't have cPanel, or access to many of the elements needed for you to do your own maintenance or changes. You may have to create a support ticket and ask the host to make some of those changes.

## Uptime Guarantees

Due to the current security climate and the prevalence of DDoS attacks (see next section), some hosts are either removing their uptime guarantee, or lowering it.

There are several free uptime monitoring services that will ping your site every 5-10 minutes to ensure it is up and running. Some will even email you notifications.

Be aware that most of them also return false positives. So, it's best if you can actually check your site's availability to verify the outage. And, you want to verify whether the host is at fault.

Reasons for outages include:

- routine server maintenance - does not count toward an uptime guarantee
- server outage
- network outage - may be beyond the host's control
- Internet hub outage - beyond the host's control
- CDN outage - beyond the host's control

(See the section on Performance for more on CDNs.)

The best, and most accurate uptime monitor I have found is [UpTime Robot](#). It's free, but I like it so much that I got the paid version. It pings my sites more often and stores reports for longer.

## DDoS Mitigation

You want to go with a host that has invested in DDoS mitigation protection. Very few of them will publicly advertise whether they have taken these measures or not. You can ask them in a pre-sales chat.

Hosts who have not adequately protected themselves put their servers and every site on it at great risk.

See the section on Security for more on DDoS attacks and what you need to do to protect your site.

## Email

What you'll find in this chapter:

- Domain related emails
- MX Record
- Site Account Emails

## Domain Related Emails

You can use anything you like as your business email, but it looks more professional to use one with your domain, such as me@mysite.com

## MX Record

The DNS, or Domain NameServer, is what controls where your domain can access the files for your site. It will point to your hosting account's IP address.

The MX Record is what controls where your domain-related email can be accessed. Unless you change it, that will also be to your hosting account's IP address.

## Site Account Emails

Most hosts offer email accounts through their servers. It's available two ways:

**Mailbox** - your email is held on the server until you pick it up using an email client, like Outlook

**Forward** - your email is redirected to another address and not held on the server.

Read [Get Your Email Off Your Hosting](#) for all of the reasons why it is best practice these days to not use your host for your email.

The bottom line on that is because it's better for both security and performance.

If you do choose to stick with a mailbox on your host, at the very least, do this:

- Ensure your email client fully syncs so that when you delete emails locally, they are also deleted on the server.
- Delete, delete, delete. Ensure that you are not piling up old emails locally and on the server. It's a poor use of your limited hosting resources.
- Ensure that you are using a secure connection. Most hosts offer both a secure and unsecured way to connect for both email and FTP. By all means, use the secure connection so that it will be encrypted. (FYI, if you use Gmail, it is a secure connection.)

## Email Services

There are several good email service providers including Google Apps, Rackspace, and GoDaddy.

Using any of them will require that you alter your MX record. And, there will likely be a setting on your hosting account for external email management. Check with your host.

### Google Apps

I moved my entire back office to GApps, including business email. It has dramatically increased my productivity, but more importantly, it has made everything more secure.

GApps is different from a regular Google Account with regular Gmail. And it costs \$5/mo or \$50/yr. But, it also has more perks with Drive and other apps, and the support is stellar. Well worth it.

You can use either Gmail or Outlook or other email clients with it too.

### Rackspace Emails

Rackspace offers hosting and a separate email service. They are very Office 365 oriented and integrate seamlessly with it. The service is \$2/mo per email address.

### GoDaddy

GoDaddy has been offering a separate email service for longer than most anyone in the business. It's secure and integrates with many email clients and is a solid choice, especially if you already have your domains registered there.

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# WordPress Security

What you'll find in this chapter:

- Backups
- Secure Install
- Updates
- Brute Force Protection
- .htaccess and robots.txt
- DDoS Attacks
- Security Plugins and Scanners

## Backups

No matter what other security measures you take, be sure you have a solid backup strategy.

**Backups are your only real security blanket.** This is not the place to scrimp.

[How to Backup Your WordPress Site](#) - Download my free report with 14 backup plugins and storage options, plus tips on backup settings.

A few important points:

- Do not rely on your host's backup - most are not guaranteed
- Automate your backups - to ensure they are done frequently (I take a full backup daily)
- Get the whole installation - don't just get your database
- Store the files off site - and automate that transfer
- **Ensure you know how to restore from the backup** - this is the part most backup plugins never talk about. Some are far easier than others.

My favorite combo is BackupBuddy to AS3 (Amazon S3). You'll find links for both in the free report above, plus why they are my favorites.

## Secure Install

Your site's security starts here. One-click type installations, and scripts on the host simply do not offer the same level of security as a manual installation. The scripts most hosts offer have radically improved, but they do leave a couple of serious security holes that end users usually make worse with their choices during the process.

Here are just a few things that are not secured during such installs:

- The database table prefix defaults to wp\_
- No security in the .htaccess file

- No robots.txt file, or not enough directives
- XML-RPC fully on
- Weak password for WordPress login

Most of the issues above can be fixed after the fact, but not all, like the table prefix. It can be done, but not worth how much trouble it is to do later.

If you have the chance, do a manual install or hire someone who knows how to do all of the things above and more, to secure your site at the root.

## Updates

Not keeping everything on your installation updated is a prime reason why sites get hacked. There are 3 areas that need to be updated, including:

- WordPress
- Plugins
- Themes

Plugins are going to be the worst offenders in this list.

[See my recommended plugins list](#) to ensure that you are using good ones.

Be sure you take a manual backup before you update anything!!

## .htaccess and robots.txt

These are two critically important files in the root of your hosting account that can help secure your site.

Special directives can be placed in each of them to tell bots to stay out of sensitive areas of your site.

The directives in .htaccess must be obeyed by every request sent to your site, by humans and bots.

The directives in robots.txt are followed by well-behaved bots and ignored by ill-behaved bots.

## Brute Force Protection

A Brute Force attack is when a hacker tries to break into your site via your WordPress login. They most often use sophisticated, rapid fire algorithms to try many attempts as quickly as possible. And they will sit there and chew on it until they crack it or a predetermined time tells them to move on.

Even if they don't crack it, every attempt uses precious system resources to try the login credentials against those stored in the database and then to report back that wasn't it.

A good Brute Force Protection plugin will allow a limited number of wrong attempts in a limited time frame before locking out the IP address of the hacker for an extended amount of time.

My favorite plugin is **Login Lockdown**. It's lightweight on your system, but extremely effective to keep bad bots from chewing system resources. The default is set to 3 attempts in 5 minutes, and then locking out the IP for an hour.

## DDoS Attacks

Botnets are huge collections of bots sent to overwhelm a site or a whole server, or even a whole network of servers.

Think of a highway between a visitor and the server where your site files are located. The visitor sends a request for the home page of your site down one lane. And the server returns the page to them down the other lane.

Think of a botnet as a wide load that clogs up both lanes so nothing else can get in or out. It makes so many requests at one time that it overwhelms everything.

**That is a DDoS attack**, which stands for Distributed Denial of Service.

If no measures are in place to block the attack, the site has to be shut down so it does not overwhelm the system resources.

If you have no security on your site, you may or may not get hacked. But you most certainly will experience a DDoS attack at some point.

**This is the top reason folks get their hosting accounts terminated**. And unless measures are put in place, the bots will likely find the site on a new host and the attack begins all over again.

If the bots gang up on the whole server, the host may need to shut it down for a time to protect the server, and all of the sites on it.

DDoS attacks have been getting bigger and more frequent since late 2013. Some hosts have spent a lot of money fortifying their infrastructure to mitigate them. Those that haven't are down for days.

See the following articles and videos for just how bad this situation has gotten, and your responsibility as a site owner to help protect your site and the host server.

[DDoS and Cybersecurity Episode 1](#) – HOA hosted by Black Lotus where we cover what's happening in online and cyber security in laymen's terms. Includes info on protecting all of your devices, and the Internet of Things (IoT).

[DDoS and Cybersecurity Episode 6](#) – HOA hosted by Black Lotus where we cover all of the predictions in the last HOA coming true and what's in store next.

[Website Security, SSL, and Google Search Rankings](#) – HOA hosted by the Sanctuary Networking Community

[Real Site Security Goes Beyond Your Site](#)

[Disable XML-RPC in WordPress to Prevent DDoS Attack](#)

[Google SSL Ranking Factor – the Why, What, and How](#)

[New XML-RPC Brute Force Attack](#)

[How Your Messy Hosting Account is Costing You Big](#)

## Security Plugins and Scanners

I am no fan of the behemoth security plugins. In my opinion, each one creates more problems than it solves by being a resource hog, a database hog, and all while adding its own security risks to a site. I don't know a webmaster worth their salt that uses them.

**Worst of all, they give you a false sense of security.**

Multiple tests have been run and discovered that most of them don't protect well against known threats.

Security scanners are okay, but just okay. They will pick up many threats, but certainly not all.

Nothing beats having your account and site properly secured by an expert and having it audited on a regular basis. Many of my clients get a refresher audit every 6-12 months. And I have a loyalty program for that reason.

If you think having your money making site properly secured is too expensive, wait to you see how much it costs not to do it. That's like leaving the door to your store unlocked and unattended.

**Get a Site Audit.**

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# Permalinks

What you'll find in this section:

- Pretty Permalinks vs Dates
- Changing Permalink Structure
- Redirects

## Pretty Permalinks vs Dates

A Permalink is the URL of your sites posts and pages. Like <http://www.blogaid.net/site-audits>

WordPress has several permalink structures to choose from. Most include numbers, especially dates. But, the most popular structure simply uses the postname, which is the title of the post or page. This structure is also commonly referred to as a pretty permalink because it looks nicer than the others, and it's easy to tell what the link is.

There are good reasons to use a date structure in your permalink, like speeding up database queries. But, you'd need a huge database to see that speed difference. Some niches, like news services could also benefit from date structures.

But, for most sites, shorter, easier to read permalinks are preferred. So much so that WordPress has declared that postname will be the default permalink structure for new installations soon. (It's about time! They came into vogue in 2012.)

## Changing Permalink Structure

You can change permalink structure at any time. In fact, it's easy to do if you're switching from one default structure to another.

However, there is a serious SEO consideration when changing permalink structures. Google will likely have already indexed your site with the current structure. Switching will make all of those link break and Google will be very unhappy with you. So will any visitors who come to your site from an old link.

If you intend to make this type of change, it's worth hiring someone familiar with creating the proper bulk redirects and who is familiar with the SEO cleanup. If it's changing from one standard to another, and there are less than 20 pages, it should be fairly inexpensive to get help with. If you have a custom structure and a lot of pages, you definitely would do well to get help with it, even if it costs. All those broken links will cost you more in visits and SEO.

## Redirects

When someone clicks on a link, or types in a URL, and lands on a different URL, that is a redirect. There are multiple types and uses for redirects.

Following are a few of the most common.



- Link shorteners - used when space is a consideration, like on Twitter, or to make the link look pretty, or for branding purposes
- Cloaking - to obfuscate a long, ugly affiliate link
- Changing from one domain to another
- Changing from one permalink structure to another

There are several ways to do redirects, including:

- In the .htaccess file - this is the fastest and least resource intensive way, and is the only way to do bulk (regex) redirects properly
- Plugins - there are several types, and while all of them make redirects easy, they come with caveats

Popular redirect plugins include:

- Redirection
- Pretty Links Lite (there is a pro/paid version too)

Such plugins can be real resource hogs. Most often they come with multiple log files that can quickly inflate a database too. If you must use a plugin, then at least turn off all of those logs. If you already had them on for a while, get your database properly optimized. (It's not likely that most database cleaner plugins will be aggressive enough to do the job properly.)

It's really not that hard to create a redirect to place in your .htaccess file. In fact, there are several free redirect generators online to right them for you. And there are lots of tutorials online too.

Redirects can hurt your SEO if not properly used. And, they can get your IP banned as spammy if you use them for bait and switch. Also, any time that you are use an affiliate link, you are required by law to state that it is such. For that reason, some affiliate programs do not allow cloaking of the link. So, be careful and read the rules about that if you make money as an affiliate marketer.

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# Themes

What you'll find in this section:

- What is a Theme?
- How to Choose a Theme
- WordPress Free Themes
- Free Themes on the Web
- HTML5 Compliance
- Mobile Friendly and Fully Responsive
- Premium Themes
- Genesis Premium Framework
- Designers vs Developers

## What is a Theme?

Think of WordPress like the framework of a house.

Think of the theme like the facade over that framework.

Think of your content as the furniture.

You can change themes as many times as you want and it has no effect on the content. All of that is held in a database.

The theme controls the look of your site, and a little bit of its function.

There are free and low cost themes, and then there are premium themes that cost more, but also offer a lot more features and functionality.

There are some best practices and guidelines when it comes to coding a theme. But, there are no absolute standards. So you may get a theme that looks good, but is sorely lacking in function, or actually hinders performance. Some even have serious security issues.

## How to Choose a Theme

One of the biggest, and most costly mistakes new site owners make is spending a lot of time and money finding the right theme.

**Here's the real skinny.**

If you know marketing and conversion, then the most basic, minimalistic theme design will work.

It's about the content, calls to action, and how you place them both.

Forget colors. Forget bells and whistles. Look for structure first. Find the one that best promotes your goals.

In my full training classes (which are 9-12 hours of instruction, we don't even go theme shopping until after 6 hours of instruction and a lot of homework creating the kind of content that is candy to both readers and search engines, and, more importantly, converts.

**That's the bottom line. The real one.** If your theme, and your whole site for that matter, are not a 24/7/365 business partner helping you meet your online goals, then the theme is the least of your problems.

**My advice** - don't start theme shopping until you have all of your goals clearly laid out, and all of your content written. No kidding. It works better that way.

Then look for a structure that promotes your goals.

Then change the colors and fonts and such. That's just paint. And it's cheap. Structure is what costs. Think of it like moving the garage to the other side of the house.

If you're just starting out, start with a theme that's as close to ready to go out of the box as possible and put as little money as possible into design. When you know more, build more on the theme.

On top of that, if you're still building your business, you will outgrow your theme in about a year or so. You can't afford to throw away a \$3000 design that no longer suits your needs. You can toss a \$100 design.

And, if you're just starting out, you are nowhere near qualified to act as the general contractor on a theme build. On yeah, there are plenty of designers you can hire who are happy for you to be in charge. Many of them are graphic artists. They don't know marketing, conversion, or SEO. And they're going to build you a site that is pretty and to your specifications. **And it won't help you sell a thing.**

If you're not a designer and don't plan to be a professional designer, then leave that part to the pros. Stay away from the DIY builders too.

Spend your time and money learning about what actually helps you have a successful, profitable site.

**And if you're not convinced yet, this should do it.**

There is no highly successful site owner who spends a minute on theme design. Not even me anymore, and I'm an old coder. I have a whole team of designers for that now. I know plenty enough to tell them exactly what I want, and then I get out of their way.

**Themes are the #1 area most new site owners get ripped off.  
Don't let that be you!**

The other big thing you need to look for in a theme is HTML5 compliance. It's not worth having otherwise. Period. No exceptions. You'll read more about this topic in the HTML5 section.

I am stone cold sold on the [Genesis](#) premium framework (aff link). Lots of folks make child themes for it, including StudioPress, which is the design branch of Genesis. You'll read more about that in the premium theme and Genesis sections.

## WordPress Free Themes

There are loads of free themes available in the WordPress repository. These have been vetted as safe to use, and compliant with the current WordPress version.

You can find them from a search within your site's admin area. Go to Appearance > Themes.

Many even offer several customization options that you can also do from within your own site.

**Sounds great, right? Here's the rub.**

The coding is all over the place. Many of those themes are not HTML5 compliant. They're safe to use, but you roll the dice on functionality and performance.

However, they do make good starter themes until you know more about what you want.

## Free Themes on the Web

I'm going to sum this up for you pretty quickly.

**Don't do it!!**

There's a reason gorgeous themes are free on the web. Many of them have malicious code. Hackers can then use your hosting account resources for their own purposes and you may never even know it's happening.

## HTML5 Compliance

As I mentioned previously, if a theme is not HTML5 Compliant, it's not worth having.

Schema markup is a special set of tags that help search engines make more contextual sense of your content. It's been around for years. WordPress started supporting it in version 3.6. But, the support for it has to run all the way through your theme.

Stats show that 10 million new HTML5 compliant sites came online in 2014 alone. All things being equal, sites that have schema markup do better in search than sites that don't.

**The bottom line is**, if your theme doesn't support HTML5 and schema markup, you're already behind, far behind.

If a theme is HTML5 compliant, it will say so, and clearly. It's a big deal now.

For more on this topic, read my [Microdata and Genesis Series](#) to see just how important all of this is, and how to get on the train you can't afford to miss.

## Mobile Friendly and Fully Responsive

Google is pushing hard for all sites to be mobile friendly. In fact, it became a ranking factor on April 21, 2015.

There are several types of mobile designs and not all of them meet Google's Guidelines.

The most popular design is fully responsive. It literally reorders its shape depending on the size of the screen on which it is being viewed. All fully responsive themes are not equal. Some have no options about showing different things on mobile than on desktop, it just reorders what's there into a single column on a phone, which is the smallest screen size.

*That could cost you money, big time.*

Before you get a theme, check it out on a mobile emulator, like [Responsinator](#).

That way you can see if your conversion points, in places like after the content and in the sidebar, still make sense. Keep in mind that a lot of folks read a blog post and then return to comment on the social media site where they found the link. If you're counting on folks scrolling past the end of your article to see your conversion points or opt-ins on their way to the comment section, you'll lose out on both.

There are **adaptive theme designs** that allow more control over how the site reorders the sections on mobile. It's more expensive and requires that you hire a designer who know how to do it. But, if your main conversion points are in your sidebar, such as running ads on your site, then the extra cost will pay for itself in more conversions.

## Premium Themes

There are most definitely themes worth paying for.

Many premium themes come as a framework and a child theme.

The framework extends the functionality of the WordPress framework. Think of it as a garage addition.

Child themes sit over the top of this larger framework. They can't sit just over WordPress. Part of their functionality would collapse.

- A premium theme alone, that does not require an additional framework will run about \$35.
- A premium framework and child theme combo will run about \$90.

With premium themes, the coding is generally better. And there are generally fewer security issues and much better performance.

But, that's not always true. There have been several premium themes on ThemeForest that are both terribly coded, and a few with serious security issues. I tend to avoid that site.

Some premium themes come with more user design options. The more there are, the more the backend code of the theme is bloated, and that could affect performance. Also, it's where a lot of site owners get bogged down and waste a lot of time with the learning curve of each theme.

Premium themes generally come with support options. But, it's a yearly fee to get both updates and support. So, watch for that hidden cost.

## Genesis Premium Framework

The moment I discovered the [Genesis](#) (aff link) premium framework I was sold, and have remained so for many years. It has the cleanest code, most features, and simply out-performs everything out there, in my book.

I won't use anything else on my sites. All of my VIP site management and all of my training clients also use Genesis. My entire design team, save one, specializes in only Genesis. Yes, that many people use it.

The Genesis framework is made by Copyblogger. The design branch is called [StudioPress](#), (aff link) and that's where you'll find child themes made for Genesis.

But, there are lots of other design houses that create child themes for Genesis too. You can find them by doing a Google search for Genesis child themes.

There are also lots of plugins made specifically for Genesis. And, there are even two DIY builders for it.

Plus, you can have a custom child theme designed for it, which is what I use on all of my sites.

Or, you can get a child theme from StudioPress, which is the design branch of Genesis, or from other reputable Genesis child theme developers. There are several of them, and you'll see many Community themes developed by these third parties on the StudioPress site.

## Designer vs. Developer

Themes come with a Cascading Style Sheet (CSS) file. That controls the look of every element of the theme from the background color to the fonts and everything in between.

Many designers actually have a graphic artist background and mainly just know how to tweak the CSS file. They are generally the lowest cost alternative for theme design. However, I have seen designers charge over \$1000 for spending an hour tweaking an out of the box design. So vet who you hire.

A developer works mainly in code. Primarily they deal with the function and structure side of a theme. They may even develop custom plugins or other solutions for a theme.

So, in general, designers will create something pretty.

Developers create something that functions.

If you can find someone in the middle, that's the best of both worlds. If you can find one that also understands marketing and SEO, they are gold.

**And they are worth paying for.**

If you think you can DIY a theme as well as they can, you're wrong.

They both know about best practices for site and usability guidelines. Plus, fully responsive design is tricky, even for an experienced person. So, it's far better to leave this to the pros.

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# Plugins

What you'll find in this chapter:

- Top Plugins I Use
- Free Plugins
- Freemium and Premium Plugins
- How Many is Too Many?
- Resource Hogs
- Configure Plugins

## Top Plugins I Use

There are certain plugins I won't create a site without. Plus, there are several plugins that I frequently recommend that just get the job done better than anything else.

[Visit my Plugins page](#) to see all plugin recommendations, as I'm constantly updating it with the best plugins to date.

## Free Plugins

There are thousands and thousands of free plugins in the WordPress Plugins repository.

All you have to do to find them is go to the Plugins > Add New link from within your WordPress Dashboard. Then in the search box, type in the name of the plugin or a word or two for the thing you want to do.

All plugins have star ratings. Unfortunately, you won't find them listed by order of rating in the repository. And there's no way to filter the search by top rated.

And, sometimes when you try a plugin and then delete it, orphaned files, folders, and database tables will be left behind.

**This is why it is so important** to follow folks like me, who keep up with plugins, and test for both performance and security. Be sure to ask around and get recommendations before you just install a bunch of plugins.

## Freemium and Premium Plugins

The WordPress Plugins repository is not the only place to find plugins. It only has free plugins, or freemium plugins.

**Freemium plugins** are usually the lite version of a paid, or premium plugin. In other words, you get to try before you buy, but it may have reduced functionality compared to the paid version.

Then there are premium-only plugins, like [BackupBuddy](#), (aff link) which is the backup plugin I use and recommend. But, there is no lite version, so you won't see it in the repository.



The main thing to remember about free and paid plugins is to get them from reputable sources. Just like free themes, some can come with hidden malicious code. The plugins in the WordPress repository have been deemed clean, but even a few of those have had malicious code injected into them on occasion.

This is the other reason you need to follow folks like me, to warn you about plugin issues. I usually post them as quickly as possible on [my G+ profile](#). If it's serious enough, I'll send it out in [BlogAid News](#). Otherwise, I'll usually cover it my weekly tips roundup post, [Tips Tuesday](#), which is a podcast and post, so you can listen or read.

## How Many is Too Many?

The only rule of thumb for plugins is that you only use the ones you really need. Keep the plugin count as low as you can.

The more plugins you have, the greater your risks for:

- conflicts
- hacks
- breaks

### **Always delete inactive plugins!**

Some may continue to be a resource drain, such as pinging the cron (the WordPress clock). If you do reactivate, it may be an older version, and that could be a security risk.

## Resource Hogs

Features are just one aspect of plugins. Getting the job done is one thing. Looking pretty is another. And how much overhead it takes to do both is the real concern.

To deliver all that functionality and look good doing it, some plugins can be real resource hogs. They task your hosting account's CPU and memory every time a visitor requests a page.

Shared hosting accounts have the lowest resource ceiling. So, you need to be super careful with your plugin choices and ensure that if a plugin is a resource hog, it's worth you taking that hit. In other words, it has to have ROI (Return on Investment).

A few of the worst resource hog plugins are:

- Redirection (if the logs are not turned off or cleared regularly)
- WordFence (if the logs and notifications aren't turned off)
- Any social media plugin that displays the conversation from that platform
- Social sharing buttons, especially those that show share counts
- Recipe plugins - to format the recipe

- Related posts - that automatically source which posts to display
- Popular posts - that automatically source which posts to display
- P3 Profiler - checks the load of your plugins. Run it only at low traffic times, then delete after use.

These are just a few specific, and types of plugins that can create a lot of resource overhead on your site and leave less resources for visitors.

## Configure Plugins

There are several plugins on my recommended list that require configuration. One of the biggest mistakes I see during [site audits](#) are plugins that are installed but not properly configured. They often do more harm than good.

Here are a few plugins that require configuration, with some of my recommended plugins at the top of the list:

- BackupBuddy - how often to backup and where to store the files off site
- TinyMCE Advanced - this plugin gets updated every time there is a change to TinyMCE in the WordPress core. Visit the [WordPress Video Library](#) and check out the free bonus section for a quick and dirty tutorial on configuring this plugin. (It keeps pace with WordPress changes and the bonus video section has the latest. You'll also find video tips like these on the [BlogAid YouTube](#) channel.)
- Login Lockdown - you can go with the default settings, but I like to make them a little stricter
- Revision Control - set to 4-5 saves before overwrite
- WordPress SEO by Yoast - this is by far the one I see the most that was installed and not configured. You will miss most of the super SEO features if you don't configure it. You'll find 7 video tutorials on this plugin alone in the full [SEO Video Course](#). The course has 2 hours of video tutorials to help you maximize SEO through your whole site and beyond.
- W3 Total Cache - for local caching to speed up your site.
- Antispam Bee - turn off notifications when a spam comment is left.
- Any type of security firewall or scanning plugin - when it runs, how it keeps logs, and how it notifies you.

These are just a few examples. Always read the datasheet on the plugin and check for settings.

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# Images

Here's what you'll find in this chapter:

- Image file types
- Optimize
- Image Size
- File Names
- Embedded vs. Featured

## Image File Types

Use the following file types when saving your images.

- jpg - for photos
- png - for graphics like your logo and other images that have few colors
- gif - for animations

## Optimize

Optimizing your images **BEFORE** uploading them to your site is absolutely crucial!!!

**I cannot overstate this fact.**

Images are one of the biggest offenders for slow page load speed, especially on mobile. Page load speed is not only a ranking factor with Google, slow loads will cause potential visitors to leave before they ever see your site.

Optimizing means compression, which can also lead to a reduction of quality. So, you want to optimize as much as possible without losing quality.

For photos taken with your camera, it also means deleting the meta data such as where the image was taken, at what time, and the camera used.

Optimize at a rate of 65%, or medium, instead of 85% or high. Check the quality with your own eyeballs. If it looks good at the lower settings, all the better.

There are lots of free online optimizing tools:

- [JPEGMini](#)
- [TinyPNG](#)

There are many other photo/image enhancing/creating services online that also compress an image when saved, such as:

- [PicMonkey](#)
- [Canva](#)

Keep in mind that WordPress compresses another 10% automatically when an image is uploaded.

## Image Size

Reduce the size of your raw image to as close to the display size you want to use on your site as possible.

Crop and resize the image **BEFORE** you upload it. Doing so with the image editing tools in WordPress does nothing to change the file size.

### **Files size is not the same as display size.**

For example, if the file size is 800MB, and the display size is 4000x3000 pixels, changing the display size to 400x300 px does not reduce the 800MB file size. It's still huge and will still take a long time to display on the site.

When you crop and/or reduce the display size, the image can tend to look fuzzy. Use a sharpen feature in the app or image software you are using to make it clear and focused again.

Keep in mind that WordPress automatically creates 3-4 extra image sizes of every image you upload. The sizes are specified by your theme. These extra sizes are used for displaying thumbnails, or other smaller image sizes in different areas of your site, like on post excerpts or archives. If the original file size is huge, the rest of the auto-generated image file sizes will be too.

Those smaller, generated sizes will look very fuzzy if the original display size is huge.

## File Names

The currently accepted naming convention of image files is all lowercase, hyphens between words.

Example: my-image-400x300.jpg

Note the size listed at the end of the file name. That is perfectly acceptable.

### **Image file names are indexed by Google.**

A good file name can positively contribute to your overall SEO. It will help on your site, and in Google Images. Use keywords that are relevant to the content where the image will be displayed.

When you upload an image to your site, fill in the Title and Alt Text areas with words you want folks to read. In the above example, that would be: My Image. The Alt Text is indexed by Google as well.

## Embedded vs. Featured

There are two ways to associate an image with a post or page.

One is to embed the image in the content.

When you place your cursor in the text of a post or page, and then Add Media to it, the image will be embedded in line with the content. That's also why you have to select the alignment.

The second way is to add a Featured Image.

In the right sidebar modules of a text editor page, you'll find a module to Set Featured Image. This attaches the image to the post or page. The image will not display in the content. But, it will have special tags around it so that it can be picked up when the post or page is shared on social media, or displayed on the home page or in other widgets.

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# SEO

Here's what you'll find in this chapter:

- Fundamentals
- Plugins

## Fundamentals

There are no great mysteries to SEO.

There are also no silver bullets.

SEO starts at the theme level. WordPress began supporting HTML5 schema (microdata) markup in version 3.6. But, your theme has to support it too for it to be indexed by Google.

This is the very foundation of SEO at this point. 100,000+ new sites a year are coming online that have schema markup. Your site will be left in the SEO dust if it doesn't have it. Period.

Read my [Microdata and Genesis Series](#) for all the details on why this is important and how to check your theme to see if it is HTML5 compliant.

Great SEO is about doing it consistently. Yes, there are plugins, and we'll cover that in a moment. But, you have to do your part too. There are 11-14 levels of SEO on every post. They are easy to do. And doing them consistently, plus creating quality content, is how I get to the front page of Google search over and over again.

## Plugins

There are really only two worthwhile SEO plugins, in my opinion.

My top pick is the WordPress SEO plugin by Yoast. The other is the All in One SEO plugin.

You can switch from AIO to Yoast's plugin. In fact, the latter has an import feature to help you switch from just about any other SEO setup.

**You have to configure the plugin!**

This is the top mistake I see site owners make when I do a site audit for them.

## Learn SEO in 2 Hours

Take my [SEO Video Course](#). You'll learn everything you need to know about:

- SEO fundamentals
- plugin configuration
- on-page SEO

- submitting your XML sitemap to Google Webmaster Tools
- and all the little site tricks others skip that make a big difference to how your site is indexed by Google

Even when folks ask me to set up their SEO for them, I send them to this course instead. YOU need to know how to do this for yourself because there SEO is not a set-it-and-forget-it thing. And you're the only one that can do your on-page SEO to coordinate with the plugin.

Beyond the technical aspects of SEO, like plugin configuration and doing on-page SEO, getting your site rank now requires **author authority**. You must consistently write high-quality content on your main topics to get ranked well for them.

There's no way around it.

No tricks or gimmicks will get you there, or keep you there for the long-term. Google has been actively issuing penalties for sites that try to game, or cheat the system.

Ranking takes time. You're not going to get there overnight. Do the work and be patient. And, watch your analytics to see what your audience is responding to and do more of that.

SEO and ranking are a big subject. You'll want to do your homework on this topic and follow what Google is changing so that you can stay in compliance.

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# Performance

Here's what you'll find in this chapter:

- Testers
- AWStats
- Caching
- CDN

Knowing your site's page load time, and the types of requests made, plus how many bots are hitting your site, and where they're coming from is crucial information to ensure your site is working at peak.

Beyond that, it's also important for you to know so that you don't spend more money on hosting just to make up for all the resources bad bots or resource hog plugins are chewing up.

## Testers

There are several free online testers that will give you real insight into what's happening on your site.

My top picks include:

- [WebPage Test](#) - this is my workhorse
- [GTMetrix](#)
- [Pingdom](#) - which I find to be the least accurate for load time and requests, but good for other info
- [Google PageSpeed Insights](#)
- [Google Mobile Friendly](#)
- [Google Structured Data Testing Tool](#)
- [Responsinator](#) - for checking on mobile devices

The raw scores shown at the top of these test results are a decent indicator of the health of your site. But, they are certainly not the whole story. And many elements contribute to each set of scores.

If your site is scoring low, get a [Site Audit](#). You'll get a full report and a live chat to help you make sense of all that geek speak stuff. And, you'll be able to make a lot of the changes yourself. You just might need help understanding what those changes should be.

A word about the Google testers. Be sure to check how your site renders on both Google PageSpeed Insights and on Google Mobile Friendly. They might be different because these



testers check different things. They need to be the same. If they're not, look through the test results to see why, especially on the Mobile Friendly tester.

A word about Responsinator. It does a pretty good job of emulating what your site will look like on multiple mobile devices. However, it won't pick up everything. If you have a separate mobile theme, it may not show that at all. I've also seen some plugins look like they work on the emulator, but not actually work when viewing the site on a real cell phone. So, be sure to check your site on as many different real mobile devices as possible.

There is a Developer Tools extension for the Chrome browser that does a good job of checking mobile emulation, at least for how it might appear on an Android phone.

## AWStats

Many host providers use cPanel. It's a brand of control panel. With it, you'll find an icon for AWstats. It delivers a ton of useful analytics that Google analytics does not.

For one, you can see your real bot hits, all of them, not just Google bots. You can also see IP addresses that are hitting your site hard.

And then you can also see stats that will be critically important to your marketing, like days and times visitors are hitting your site most. And what device or browser they are using.

You can also see more keywords they are searching on to find you.

To conserve resources, some hosts no longer turn AWStats on by default. If you find there are no stats for you to view, in cPanel, you'll find another icon to Choose Stats Program. You'll likely see AWStats and Webalizer. You only need AWStats, which is the better of the two programs. Give it a day or two to start building stats.

## Caching

There are three types of caching:

- on the host server
- local
- CDN

Some hosts offer caching on a few of their hosting packages. You likely won't find them on shared. They will likely only be offered on Managed VPS, VPS, and Dedicated.

Local caching is achieved via a plugin on the site, like W3 Total Cache (W3TC), or WP Super Cache.

A CDN is a Content Delivery Network. The two most popular are CloudFlare (my favorite) and MaxCDN. (CDNs are covered in the next section.)

Caching delivers your site content faster.

**All caching must be properly configured and coordinated.** Don't think you're going to throw a plugin at the site with the default settings and get the most out of it.

How well each caching option works depends on your host environment. This is why you see some folks say a certain caching setup works well for them while others say it makes their site run slower.

There is no one-size-fits-all set of configuration options. And the easier a caching solution is to set up, the less effective it will be, guaranteed.

Caching is something that can dramatically reduce your page load speed, which can affect both your ranking and visitor count. So, it's worth investing in doing right. Hire a pro to help you.

## CDN

A CDN mirrors a copy of your site's pages and posts on servers all over the world. Most have multiple server locations within each country. This allows the files to be delivered from the server nearest to the visitor requesting it, which makes for faster page loads.

[CloudFlare](#) is my CDN of choice.

It offers several performance enhancement settings to further speed along page delivery.

Plus, it is the only CDN with a modicum of bad bot protection in the free version.

CloudFlare partners with many hosting companies to make the service available via the control panel.

### **Don't Do It!!!**

While it's easier to initially set up, you will have a goofy split of who controls what. The host will control some functions, and you'll still need to get a CloudFlare account to control the rest of the functions.

It's far better to just get the CloudFlare account and set it all up there in the first place.

The one big thing to know is that a CDN becomes your Domain Name Server.

Your current domain registrar will still be who you pay for your domain, but you'll be pointing your DNS to CloudFlare. And then it will point to your site.

In other words, CloudFlare (and all CDNs) sit between the domain and the host. That's how they can properly redirect the file delivery.

And, it's also where they can bounce bad bots away before they ever reach your site, saving your precious system resources.

If you are setting up a new site, or moving to a new host put CloudFlare on it immediately. This will permanently hide the host server's IP from bad bots and your site will be attacked far less.

# Tutorials and Resources

After reading this book, you probably realize that there's a lot more to running a successful site than you imagined.

My hope is that you are now a lot more in-the-know and that you can make informed decisions about your site.

That's what BlogAid is all about. Success via education. An informed site owner can avoid expensive pitfalls and can better vet the info they read about what it takes to create a successful site.

## Ready for some help with all of this?

I have three easy ways for you to learn even more.

### [WordPress, SEO, Genesis Library](#)

- Libraries start at \$1.
- This is the perfect way for end users to learn WordPress, premium themes, SEO, and more.
- The VIP library is a lifetime subscription. And things are changing all the time.

Over 60 tutorials in 4 Libraries include:

- WordPress Starter
- WordPress Basics
- WordPress Advanced and Genesis (includes all WordPress videos)
- SEO Course - 2 hour course
- MailChimp Course (basics of getting started)
- VIP Library with everything for life

### [Webmaster Training](#)

This is the perfect set of courses for designers, developers, or anyone who wants a deep dive on site setup, maintenance, performance, and keeping it all secure.

Over 50 tutorials in 4 libraries covering:

- Site Setup
- Security
- SEO

- Performance

## **Live Classes**

I offer live, 1-on-1 training that is uniquely tailored to you and your site needs.

Scratch to Published courses take you from sandbox to launch. You learn by doing.

## **Site Audits**

Put a pair of qualified eyes on your site. On average, I find 26 security and performance holes.

If you've had a site for a while, you've probably got resource hog plugins and orphaned files and folders everywhere, plus a bloated database. Let's get all that cleaned out and make your site more secure and run faster!

## **More Help**

There's a wealth of free resources all over [BlogAid](#).

Just poke around the site a bit and you'll see plenty to help you with your project.

Or, [contact me directly](#) and let me know what you're struggling with, or advice on.

I'm here to help!

## **About the Author**



MaAnna is a geek who can still speak in plain English and helps small businesses and solopreneurs be successful and profitable through comprehensive site consultation and training including WordPress, SEO, content and conversion analysis, performance and security, and member sites.

Chat with MaAnna on [Google+](#) | [Twitter](#) | [YouTube](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Pinterest](#)

Be sure to visit [BlogAid.net](#) for more tips, one-on-one classes, and video tutorials.